

BOOK REVIEWS



The Lions of July: Prelude to War, 1914. By William Jannen, Jr. Presidio, 1996. 456 Pages. \$18.95, Soft-bound. Reviewed by Colonel Christopher B. Timmers, U.S. Army, Retired.

For a book that purports to explain in detail the steps that led to the outbreak of World War I, *Lions of July* does not disappoint. Indeed, it goes well beyond that ambitious goal and offers an excellent overview of European power relations that, in some cases, extended back over several centuries.

It is not a simple task to understand why the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand (heir-presumptive to the Austro-Hungarian throne) in Sarajevo (Bosnia) by Serbian radicals plunged dozens of countries into what would become the bloodiest conflict of history up to that point. Even with Jannen's fine book, it still is not a simple task, but his narrative and day-by-day, in some cases hour-by-hour, accounts of what followed the assassination gives the reader a perspective that puts understanding within his grasp.

Most helpful, interestingly enough, is Jannen's discourse on the Balkans. This discussion is timely for those of us who follow events in the former Yugoslavia, and it should be mandatory reading for members of the press who cover this area of the world.

With chapters entitled "The View from Paris," "The View from Nish," and "The Kaiser Sees No Reason for War," the reader can almost believe that world war was unnecessary, unwanted, and totally avoidable. Perhaps it was, but the author explains why he thinks it was inevitable. Personalities, nationalism, mistrust, and infantile pride would hurl millions to their deaths and result in a war expected to end all wars. In the last chapter, Jannen recounts how, in the aftermath of the armistice, the map of Europe had been changed, how monarchies fell, and how the groundwork had been laid for a conflict just over 20 years later—another world war that would be even more costly, alter the map of Europe again, enslave millions under Communist regimes, and result in the introduction of nuclear weapons.

Lloyd George, Prime Minister of Great Britain, later remarked that war was too important a matter to be left to generals. But

then to whom is peace to be left? Generals did not issue ultimatums after the Archduke's assassination, did not give the orders for mobilization, did not declare war, and did not send young men to die. If war cannot be left to generals, it is even more obvious that it should not be left to politicians.

Public Affairs: The Military and the Media, 1968-1973. By William M. Hammond. U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1996. 659 Pages. \$43.00. Reviewed by Dr. Joe P. Dunn, Converse College.

The actions of the news media during the Vietnam War have been the subjects of controversy that has inspired a large literature, including important interpretations by Peter Braestrup, Daniel Hallin, and Clarence Wyatt. William Hammond's first volume, *Public Affairs: The Military and the Media, 1962-1968* (published in 1988) was a significant contribution to that debate. This sequel, which focuses on the Nixon Presidency and Creighton Abrams' command as it brings the story forward, is an equally important work.

Drawing heavily upon the Nixon national security files and many other sources, Hammond looks at such high-profile issues as the Military Assistance Command Vietnam's (MACV's) handling of My Lai and the Calley Trial, the Cambodian Incursion, Lam Son 719, the 1972 Spring Offensive, and the Christmas Bombing, as well as slightly lower profile events such as Hamburger Hill, the Green Beret murder case, Firebase Mary Ann, and the NCO Club scandals. He also treats the issues of drug abuse, race relations, combat refusals, herbicides, and allegations of press censorship.

Balanced, objective, and thorough, this volume, like Hammond's earlier contribution, is among the best in the U.S. Army Center of Military History's Vietnam series. The book provides valuable perspective for the inevitable issue, in any war, of the relationship between the media and the military.

Blue Helmets: The Strategy of UN Military Operations. By John Hillen.

Brassey's, 1998. 320 Pages. \$26.95. Reviewed by Colonel George G. Eddy, U.S. Army, Retired.

Author John Hillen sets out to answer the basic question, "What is the UN's proper role in world peace, especially as regards applications of military force?" And he answers it well. He takes us through details of the UN Charter, the Secretary-General and the Secretariat, observation missions, traditional peacekeeping missions, second-generation peacekeeping missions, and finally enforcement actions. In the process, he examines command and control and chain of command matters as complicated by ever-changing political considerations and often infeasible mandates of the principal UN members. Without sovereign powers, such as political authority and military legitimacy, the UN has been forced to improvise and compromise.

The resources and dominion to mobilize, direct, and deploy international military forces must be provided by UN members, who often disagree significantly as to how missions are to be accomplished. This inherent weakness of the UN "encouraged some competition from national chains of command," Hillen observes, "and made for a UN chain of command that was at times unwieldy, unresponsive, ill-defined, and not very authoritative. It also gave rise to the practice of formulating ad hoc control procedures on the fly during field operations." Within this context the author reviews such principal UN operations as Iran and Iraq (1988-1991), Southern Lebanon (1978-1996), Somalia (1993), and enforcement actions in Korea and the Persian Gulf. By 1995, 80,000 personnel from scores of countries were deployed in some 20 peacekeeping operations, and UN expenditures for that year reached \$3.6 billion.

Those who point to some of the UN successes are countered by those who remain appalled by the death of 18 Americans in Mogadishu, Somalia—for what? There also remains a conviction that the efforts to establish enduring, real peace in Bosnia are futile. No matter how many troops are deployed to the former Yugoslavia, or how long they stay, the bitter hatreds, centuries old, are likely to remain untouched by the

presence of blue-helmeted units under the UN banner. The keys to success in circumstances such as those in Bosnia lie in obtaining local consent, cooperation, and support, and this is not happening on a scale large enough to make a difference. Iraq is another story, where Saddam Hussein remains in power and thumbs his nose at UN inspectors searching for weapons of mass destruction.

Consequently, says the author, simple military missions, such as observation and traditional peacekeeping with a political influence dominant over token military forces and involvement—all predicated on the belligerents' acceptance of a UN presence—are the core competence of the UN. The more dynamic military operations should be undertaken only by rehearsed military alliances or coalitions led by a major military power. The Gulf War comes quickly to mind. Most Americans, opposed to UN command and control of U.S. military forces, probably would agree with these conclusions of Mr. Hillen.

***The Warrior Generals: Combat Leadership in the Civil War.* By Thomas B. Buell. Crown Publishers, 1997. 494 Pages. \$35.00.**

***Civil War Generalship: The Art of Command.* By W.J. Wood. Praeger Publishers, 1997. 269 Pages. \$59.95.** Reviewed by Doctor Charles E. White, Infantry Branch Historian.

Why do we need more books on generals of the American Civil War? Indeed, why do we need more *books* on the American Civil War? The answer to these questions is simple: the more we study history, the more we understand ourselves. We are the one constant in history; we do not change.

Remember the news footage of American Army engineers trying desperately to build a pontoon bridge across the flooding Sava River in Bosnia in January 1996? Go back to December 1864, and you will see Federal engineers trying desperately to build a pontoon bridge across the raging Duke River in Tennessee. Had George Thomas emerged from the past and stood alongside the American general in Bosnia, he would have instantly recognized the circumstances, the challenges, and the timeless lessons of history.

Warrior Generals and *Civil War Generalship* are two fine studies of combat leadership during the American Civil War. The very titles of these engrossing books provide a glimpse of their contents. Thomas Buell and W.J. Wood examine the art of battle

command. Buell selects three pairs of "warrior" generals: Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee; George H. Thomas and John Bell Hood; and, Francis C. Barlow and John B. Gordon. Wood also selects three pairs of warrior generals: Stonewall Jackson and Nathaniel Banks; William Rosecrans and Braxton Bragg; and, George H. Thomas and John Bell Hood.

Buell's selection of Grant and Lee, Thomas and Hood, Barlow and Gordon as portraits of warrior generals is truly insightful. Grant "the Yeoman" and Lee "the Aristocrat" commanded at the highest echelons and symbolize both the citizen and the professional soldier, as do Thomas "the Roman" and Hood "the Knight-Errant," both of whom commanded at army level. Barlow "the Puritan" and Gordon "the Cavalier," who led regiments and divisions, represent the finest traditions of the citizen-soldier. The stories of these six men create a sweeping panorama of the American Civil War.

Wood, in choosing his six generals, selects mostly professionals who had to deal with the problems of operational command. In this regard, Buell's study is much more representative of the Civil War and its generals. Nevertheless, Wood's examination seeks to demonstrate that the tactical and strategic problems associated with operational command threatened to overwhelm untried generals, especially the professionals.

For the first time in American history, as Wood so aptly points out, commanders on both sides had to lead mass armies of untried citizen soldiers into battle, using outdated linear tactics and inapplicable strategic principles. Senior leaders were forced to create and develop a personal art of command on the job; that is, while actually on campaign and on the battlefield. The Army had no senior war college before the Civil War. Wood convincingly shows that these generals developed a pragmatic art of command that still provides examples for military leaders today.

Turning to some specifics, Buell challenges the conventional view that the South had the superior leaders. He argues that Union generals had the edge in strategic thinking, logistical preparation and sustainment, and the use of innovative tactics. In particular, Buell questions Lee's reputation as a military genius and suggests that Thomas, the "Rock of Chickamauga," was the greatest general of the war. Many will reel from Buell's assertions, but they are firmly rooted in fact.

Wood claims that *Civil War Generalship*

is the first study of Civil War command since Douglas Southall Freeman's *Lee's Lieutenants* (1944). This may be, but Wood's three case studies really offer nothing new by themselves. What makes his book worth reading is his superbly written study of the American Civil War in Western history. Here, Wood is at his best, placing the war firmly in the context of its time and providing one of the finest discussions of the decision-making process at the operational level of war. Wood also corrects some of the major misperceptions that have adversely influenced our ability to view the Civil War in its proper context.

In these two books, Buell and Wood treat their subjects with sympathy and insight. Both show us how these leaders—tested to the limits by a war of unparalleled ferocity—prevailed through strength of character that often existed side by side with flaws that would have undone lesser men. Both books are compelling and authoritative and provide delightful reading about Civil War generalship.

***Great Raids in History: From Drake to Desert One.* Edited by Samuel A. Southworth. Sarpedon, 1997. 384 Pages. \$27.50.** Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel James H. Willbanks, U.S. Army, Retired.

This book is about daring actions by small units, not great campaigns or armies on the move. The editor describes the raid as "the second most primitive tactic in the history of warfare, after the ambush," but notes that "it has also become the most sophisticated type of operation in the modern era." While it is true that no raid ever won a major war, all 19 recorded here had a powerful effect on the conflicts of which they were a part.

The essays cover operations from Elizabethan times to the present and address such diverse actions as Drake at Cadiz, Custer at Washita, Mosby at Fairfax Courthouse, the Israelis at Green Island, the Green Berets at Son Tay, and the Desert One disaster in Iran. The common thread throughout is the bold commander with a daring plan. The essays chronicle undaunted courage and dynamic leadership under dire conditions. These actions, even the failures, point out the importance of the human factors in combat; the essays are eloquent reminders that the timeless requirements for initiative and courage still count for something in the impersonal forces of war.

Fritz Heinzen provides a thought-provoking conclusion that addresses the potential for such daring actions in future

warfare. While warning against the "dumping" of heavy conventional forces, Heinzen predicts that many future conflicts may well rely less on great battles than on operations carried out by small elite forces, particularly as the line between peace and war becomes more blurred. He concludes that "raids, whether in a wartime context or a peacetime setting, will be with us in the future...The actions of small groups of a nation's elite force...will no doubt echo the innovative courage and inspired leadership that have marked great raiders of every country and era."

The essays in this book are engagingly written and generally well researched. Stephen Tanner's essays on Custer and Skorzenny stand out as lively, reliable writing, and Richard Kiper's discussion of the Desert One debacle points out clearly what happens when the best-laid plans go wrong. The book includes photos, a bibliography, and an excellent index.

***Arrogant Armies: Great Military Disasters and the Generals Behind Them.* By James M. Perry. John Wiley & Sons, 1996. 314 Pages. \$27.95.** Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Harold E. Raugh, Jr., U.S. Army.

Armies frequently lose battles because of the timidity of their leaders, the use of obsolescent tactics or weapons, or confrontation by a numerically superior and overwhelming adversary, among other reasons. There are other occasions when larger forces with seemingly competent commanders using modern tactics and weapons are defeated, basically by their own feelings of superiority—their arrogance.

Journalist and author James M. Perry does not write about the larger and better known battles of war in this interesting book. Rather, he focuses on "military expeditions dispatched by imperial governments to crush native tribes or 'inferior' cultures in the raw pursuit of power, trade, land, or world status," what Kipling called the "savage wars of peace."

The first of 11 case studies is the campaign of British General Braddock during the French and Indian War. Braddock's ignominious 1755 defeat at the Monongahela, according to the author, was a "British blunder." Throughout this chapter (and others), the author seems to select undocumented evidence to reinforce his thesis on the alleged arrogance and incompetence of armies. His sensationalism, however, frequently targets the military leaders and verges on the libelous. Braddock, the com-

mander of "regimental troublemakers" and "misfits," is described as "stout in build, slightly dense in mental capacity, and extremely rude in social intercourse." To further vilify Braddock, the author condemns the general's "better known" sister: "Having run up heavy debts at the gambling tables in Bath, she hanged herself with her own girdle."

The remaining chapters (also full of irrelevant and unnecessary information) describe six British, one Italian, one Spanish, and two U.S. military "expeditions." The defeats of U.S. Generals Harmer and St. Clair at the hands of Indians in 1790-1791 are narrated in chapter 2, and chapter 9 consists of "Major General William R. Shafter and the Spanish-American War (1898)." The latter is an odd inclusion in this book since the U.S. won the campaign, despite initial problems with mobilization and organization. A short, but thought-provoking chapter, superficially recounting "American Mini-disaster in Somalia (1993)," concludes the book.

The dust jacket comments that the author used "contemporary newspaper accounts, military memoirs, diaries of soldiers who fought in the battles, and other firsthand letters and papers. Since there are no footnotes to document the many quotations, this claim is difficult to substantiate. The book does include 11 illustrations and a limited "annotated bibliography," but maps are conspicuously absent. The text is fast-paced and journalistic in nature, although at times it seems little more than a string of information from external sources, punctuated by the author's novice "insight" on military leadership and operations.

The defeats of the "Western" forces in the battles chronicled in *Arrogant Armies* were generally not due to such simple and clear-cut reasons of "arrogance" as the author would have readers believe. The fog and friction of war; the use and misuse of technology and tactics; and the myriad intangibles of the human element of leadership, all combine or conspire to defeat a force on the battlefield. Perhaps the value of this book is to stimulate thought and discussion on the role of "arrogance" in the military forces and operations.

***Vietnam Military Lore: Legends, Shadows and Heroes.* By Master Sergeant Ray A. Bows, U.S. Army, Retired. Bows and Sons Publishing (2055 Washington Street, Hanover, MA 02339), 1997. 1,180 Pages. \$39.95 (+\$4.95 shipping and handling).** Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Albert N.

Garland, U.S. Army, Retired.

If you served in Vietnam or are interested in knowing more about the Vietnam War, this is the book for you. Don't let its size scare you away. It offers days and weeks of interesting reading of the kind many military men savor.

The task Sergeant Bows set for himself sounds simple: Get a list of the various U.S. camps, billets, clubs, and the like in Vietnam and in the United States that were named for deceased individuals, and then dig out their stories and why their names were so honored. And throw in a bit of history along the way, explaining the historical context for the incident or incidents described. But this task was not simple, not in the least.

Bows, a Vietnam veteran in his own right, knows whereof he writes. He published a previous book in his Vietnam Lore series—unfortunately, now out of print.

Most of the individuals mentioned in this book served in and died in Vietnam between 1957 and 1965, before the arrival of the first U.S. combat troops. One man's story goes back to 26 September 1945, when Lieutenant Colonel A. Peter Dewey was killed outside Saigon in an ambush triggered by a small group of Viet Minh irregulars. To Bows, Dewey was the first of more than 58,000 Americans who lost their lives in post-World War II Vietnam. Bows is in the process of publishing a follow-on volume tentatively titled *Vietnam Military Lore: Heroes of Valor*.

Fortunately, Bows has included a separate chapter at the end of this volume in which he recaps the events surrounding the lives and deaths of most of the individuals he mentions. Bows also feels this chapter can be used as "a guide to many of the names listed in Panel 1E of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial" in Washington, D.C.

Bows has included a large number of photographs and an index, both of which add immeasurably to the book's value. One cannot help admiring the tremendous effort Bows has put into pulling together a mass of material—from official and unofficial sources, from families and friends—into a coherent whole. It is more than worth its price.

***Stalingrad: The Fateful Siege: 1942-1943.* By Antony Beevor. Viking Press, 1998. 494 Pages. \$35.00.** Reviewed by Colonel Cole C. Kingseed, U.S. Army.

To many historians, the battle of Stalingrad marked the turning point of the German-Soviet war. There, amidst the rubble of the once proud city that bore the name of the Soviet head of state, a titanic struggle

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emerged in the summer of 1942. By late January 1943, Hitler's Sixth Army, once the strongest in the *Wehrmacht*, surrendered to the Soviet victors and marched into captivity. It was a blow from which Hitler never fully recovered.

In the latest book examining this epic battle, British author Antony Beevor explores the political and military dimensions of the battle, and also provides the individual soldier's perspective of the street fighting that characterized the battle. According to Beevor, the battle defies comprehension through standard examination. Having access to the archives of the Russian ministry of defense and captured German documents, including war diaries and operational reports, Beevor has compiled a riveting narrative that conveys the unprecedented nature of the fighting and its effects on those caught up in it with little hope of escape. Of immense importance are the very detailed daily reports sent from the Stalingrad Front to Aleksandr Shchrbakov, the head of the political department of the Red Army in Moscow. Beevor's purpose is to demonstrate, within the framework of a conventional historical narrative, the experience of troops on both sides, using a wide range of new material.

What makes this particular account so fascinating is Beevor's willingness to question the traditional interpretation of the struggle along the Volga. He is particularly harsh with German commander Friedrich von Paulus. Paulus certainly failed to anticipate the pending Soviet counterattack despite intelligence reports that indicated a massive offensive. The Sixth Army's daily report on the eve of the Soviet offensive was brief: "Along the whole front, no major changes. Drift-ice on the Volga weaker than on the day before." Though Paulus has often been blamed for not disobeying Hitler's order to stand fast at Stalingrad once the scale of the impending disaster was clear, his real failure was his refusal to withdraw his armor from the wasteful battle in the city to prepare a strong mechanized force ready to react rapidly to face the threat. And once the Soviet offensive began, Paulus failed to comprehend the enormity of Soviet resources dedicated to the enterprise.

Beevor also sheds new light on the fate of some of Stalingrad's defenders. His description of the horrific conditions in the field hospitals is compelling. He alleges that the Soviets took particular delight in murdering captured *Hiwis*, Russians who had cast their fate with Germany. Beevor also charges that Soviet authorities executed

approximately 13,500 of their own soldiers during the campaign for such treasonous behavior as desertion, crossing over to the enemy, cowardice, incompetence, and self-inflicted wounds. These men joined the rolls of 1.1 million Red Army casualties, of which 485,751 were fatalities. Germany suffered the complete destruction of its Sixth Army, including 91,000 prisoners of war, though this total is still widely disputed. Half of these prisoners died by spring. Putting the victory into perspective, Beevor opines that the greatest propaganda success extended far beyond Soviet frontiers. The story of the Red Army's sacrifice had a powerful effect across the world, especially the resistance movements within occupied Europe.

In the final analysis, Beevor has produced an excellent reappraisal of the battle. As the historical events have been examined in the post-war years, there have been mutual recriminations over responsibility for the sacrifice of the Sixth Army at Stalingrad. By examining the battle from the perspective of the combatants, and with the benefit of recently declassified archives, Beevor has made a major contribution to our understanding of the climactic battle that altered the course of history.

CAP Môt: The Story of a Marine Special Forces Unit in Vietnam, 1968-1969. By Barry L. Goodson. University of North Texas Press, 1997. 306 Pages. \$32.50. Reviewed by Michael F. Dilley, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Barry Goodson was an assistant leader of a Combined Action Program (CAP) team in Chu Lai, a village near the South China Sea in Vietnam's Quang Tin Province. Near the end of his tour, Goodson was wounded, evacuated to Japan and later home, and then discharged from the U.S. Marine Corps. His book about his experiences, *CAP Môt* is designed to serve a two-fold purpose: The first purpose, obviously, is to recount the activities of his squad-sized unit in its "Special Forces" mission. The second purpose, which does not come out until near the end of his story, is that he hopes that writing about his experiences will help him deal with his part in fighting a war overseas for his country and then coming home to vilification by his fellow countrymen for having performed his duty.

I believe that he is more successful in achieving the second goal than the first. Examining the book from that perspective, it is easy to see that he is able to use his writing to say what he may not have been able to

convey orally and that the act of remembering and writing probably has helped him more than anything else he has tried. His book is less successful than it could have been when it comes to talking about his unit's Special Forces mission. His writing style tends to be overly dramatic; what this does is to build up relatively minor actions at the beginning of the book so that, when he comes to the end of his tour and is suddenly wounded in an ambush, the reader has become lulled into just reading instead of being shocked, surprised, or even concerned.

The most serious failing of the book is that there is almost no explanation of what the Combined Action Program was, or what made it a "Special Forces" unit. This is a serious problem because not much has been written about this program, although those who know about it or who were in it are willing to talk freely about what it accomplished. Goodson spends less than a page talking about the specific training he received, and mentions what his unit did with the villagers only in a few passing comments. Since so little is generally available about the program, this should be the "hook" that would attract readers to the book. Without that, *CAP Môt* is too much like a lot of other books about war and even Vietnam, with no particular reason to select it over any of the others. The book's title, by the way, refers to Goodson's unit—*môt* is Vietnamese for "one." His unit's radio call-sign was "CAP One."

RECENT AND RECOMMENDED

The Colonizers: Early European Settlers and the Shaping of North America. Edited by T.J. Stiles. Berkley, 1998. 418 Pages. \$16.00, Soft-bound.

Black Brass: Black Generals and Admirals in the Armed Forces of the United States. Second Edition. By Henry Dabbs. (First published in 1984 by African-American Heritage House.) Howell Press, 1997. 231 Pages. \$12.95, Soft-bound.

A Marine's True Story of Duty and Heroism in Vietnam. By Michael C. Hodgins. Ballantine, 1997. 342 Pages. \$5.99.

Fighting in Hell: The German Ordeal on the Eastern Front. (Originally published in 1995.) Ballantine, 1998. 341 Pages. \$6.99.

Airpower and Ground Armies: Essays on the Evolution of Anglo-American Air Doctrine, 1940-1943. Edited by Daniel R. Mortensen. Air University Press, 1998. 206 Pages.

Foxholes & Color Lines: Desegregating the U.S. Armed Forces. By Sherie Mershon and Stephen Schlossman. Johns Hopkins, 1998. 393 Pages.

The 90th Division in World War I: The Texas-Oklahoma Draft Division in the Great War. By Lonnie J. White. Originally published in 1996. Sunflower University Press, 1998.