

BOOK REVIEWS



Call to Glory: The Life and Times of a Texas Ranger. By Michael J. Gilhuly, M.D., J. D., and Marilyn Gilhuly.

1st Books Library, 2001. 376 Pages. Reviewed by Russell A. Eno, *Infantry Magazine* editor.

Few writers of historical fiction have the resources and expertise to draw upon their own genealogy as source materials, but Michael and Marilyn Gilhuly have done so admirably in this account of the three Wiley brothers' lives and adventures in the years shortly before and after the Civil War. The three lived and fought in Texas during those tumultuous decades beginning in 1862 and lasting until the Texas Rangers became the guardians of peace and stability on what was to be a dangerous frontier until the late 1800's.

The book opens in March, 1862, with an account of the battle for possession of the strategically critical Glorieta Pass east of Santa Fe, New Mexico Territory. In this action, the 2nd, 4th, and 7th Texas Mounted Rifles were facing an assault by Federal troops under command of Colonel (later General) Edward R.S. Canby. Michael Gilhuly, West Point '68, is a veteran of the Vietnam War, and his accounts of the unfolding battle are seen through the eyes and laid down in the words of a Soldier who has endured combat.

The characters are credible, unembellished Americans dealing with circumstances they neither sought nor avoided, but instead faced and dealt with in the best traditions of the Republic of Texas and the American character. Readers of this superb book will understand the evolution of the toughness that characterized those on the frontier, at a time when danger was far more imminent and death more violent than at almost any time in our nation's history. The resourceful, self-reliant frontiersman of today's screen was a reality in the middle of the 19th century, when the traits we now point to with such pride spelled the difference between success and failure and —literally — life and death.

With the War behind them, our characters were faced with the transition from tactical decisions and operations to the establishment of a society in which settlers, merchants, and former Soldiers could resume the routine of their lives. During that period, violence and those accustomed to employing it were ever-present, and the Texas Rangers responded as the only force available to provide stability.

The plot's dialog tends to decelerate occasionally, and indeed the interplay between characters, just as in life, has its slow moments, but this is not a major flaw, nor does it impair the readability of this fine book. If you want to learn about the nature of the Civil War in the West, devoid of charts and maps, this is the book to read, for it is history seen over the shoulders of the men and women who lived — and died — in writing it.

An American Soldier: The Wars of General Maxwell Taylor. By John M. Taylor. Presidio Press, 2001 (1989). Reviewed by Colonel Cole C. Kingseed, U.S. Army, Retired.

In the 15 years since his death in 1987, General Maxwell D. Taylor has been the subject of several biographies, none more favorable than *An American Soldier*, written by Taylor's eldest son, who is a fine historian and biographer in his own right. In his latest work, the younger Taylor seeks to provide an objective biography that strikes a balance between portraying the "personal" Taylor he knew and the Soldier-statesman whose actions and recommendations merit closer scrutiny. The general who emerges from these pages is a pragmatic officer who combined a penchant for battlefield leadership with a sense of strategic analysis that two presidential administrations found indispensable.

Interestingly enough, the author divides his text into four sections that address the

key aspects of his father's career. The first section takes the reader through Taylor's years as a student of the military profession, intent on developing the leadership skills necessary to command American Soldiers in battle. From West Point, where Taylor graduated in 1922, to Rome, where he conducted a highly-publicized mission behind enemy lines to determine the feasibility of an airborne assault, Taylor earned a reputation as a no-nonsense officer on whom senior headquarters could depend in time of crisis. Not surprisingly, Eisenhower selected Taylor to command the 101st Airborne Division on the eve of the Normandy invasion.

Taylor continued to refine his leadership skills in the book's next section entitled "The Warrior." From Normandy to Berchtesgaden and from Berlin to Panmunjom, Maxwell Taylor demonstrated his ability to lead Soldiers in combat. Ironically, Taylor was initially absent during the division's defense of Bastogne, which he called the 101st Airborne Division's "finest hour" of the war. Taylor subsequently said that his absence there was one of his greatest disappointments in World War II.

At the completion of the war, Taylor served as superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy, where with the urging of Army Chief of Staff Eisenhower, he introduced a course in military leadership into the curriculum. The younger Taylor correctly identifies the resignation of an unusually high number of cadets during Taylor's superintendency as one of the most complex and frustrating periods in West Point's history.

By far the most interesting section of this biography is the author's analysis of his father as a strategist during the presidencies of Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson. Regrettably, the younger Taylor offers little that is not present in Taylor's own autobiography, *Swords and Plowshares*.

As Army Chief of Staff from 1955-1959, General Taylor remained frequently at odds with Eisenhower's defense policies, and the

author is less than objective in accepting his father's view that Ike's defense policies were fundamentally unsound. Taking his case to the public by writing a scathing criticism of Eisenhower's military strategy by advocating a switch from massive retaliation to a more flexible response, Taylor attracted the attention of President-elect John Kennedy, who appointed him his special military representative and later Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Taylor's term as chairman and later as U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam produced mixed results, not the least of which was an increased American military presence in Southeast Asia. Contrary to the author's claim that his father had no private agenda, or aspirations to greater authority, Taylor consolidated his authority in the Joint Chiefs at the individual chiefs' expense. As ambassador, there remains a great deal of controversy concerning how "tight a ship" Taylor ran as the principal coordinator of the U.S. presence in Vietnam. To the younger Taylor's credit, he does conclude that by 1965, few in the Johnson administration, including Ambassador Taylor, seriously considered withdrawal and the vast majority were certainly unwilling to face any option that acknowledged the possibility of defeat by a third-rate power. As military victory continued to be elusive, the ambassador remained a hawk on bombing, but a dove on the rapid escalation of ground troops that William Westmoreland and the Joint Chiefs advocated.

In the final analysis, Maxwell Taylor bequeathed to his nation a lifetime of selfless service. Though many observers have questioned his personal motives, few can deny that in addition to a distinguished military career culminating in the nation's highest military officer, Taylor was a strategist whose "geopolitical wisdom" made him an indispensable presidential advisor. *An American Soldier* could be more objective in the portrayal of its subject prior to the Johnson era, but this biography provides the reader with a remarkable insight into the life and career of one of this nation's preeminent Soldier-statesmen.

In the final analysis, John Taylor succeeds in portraying his father as a far more complicated Soldier-statesman than the general's contemporaries initially observed. The author is not so successful in painting an objective picture of Maxwell Taylor.

***One More Bridge to Cross: Lowering the Cost of War.* By John Poole. Emerald Isle, NC: Posterity Press, 1999. 142 pages. \$9.50, Softbound.** Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Greg Wilcox, U.S. Army, Retired.

One More Bridge to Cross is a second book by John Poole; the first was: *The Last Hundred Yards: The NCO's Contribution to Warfare*. Some may not make the association between the big red book (*The Last Hundred Yards*) and the little blue book (*One More Bridge to Cross*), but John Poole's passion for Soldiering is more than on display. It is a challenge to each and every Soldier to pick up this book, read it and learn. While "Gunny" Poole's target audience is clearly the NCO corps of both the Army and the Marine Corps, this book is a "must read" for the officer corps and new Soldiers as well.

In *One More Bridge*, Poole puts together the ingredients of how to fight and win in the 21st Century. Shedding the concepts and precepts by which we train today, Poole lays down the need for a new type of Soldier who can merge the concepts of physical, mental and moral warfare from the bottom up. Further, he lays down a doctrine of *laissez faire* for the over-managing Courtney Massengales (*Once an Eagle*); something the bureaucracy will not be able to abide. At the same time, Poole knows, as we all do, that the American NCO corps can and will train despite the obstacles the chain-of-command has placed in its path. The question is, will they be allowed to train for the next war or the last war? It would serve the Army and Marine Corps well if this book were placed on the respective professional reading lists for all officers.

Can this book be criticized? The answer is yes, but consider the source. Those reviewers who would criticize it on tactical grounds will only demonstrate their own tactical shortcomings, if not deficiencies. Poole is a tactician's tactician. Those who would criticize teaching infantrymen how to think will demonstrate their ignorance of the requirements of close combat. The Israelis, who understand close combat, put their most intelligent Soldiers in the Infantry. The critics of the moral element of this book will only identify the reviewers as not having studied or understood the late Colonel John Boyd, USAF, who may have been the most relevant military theorist of

the past century, for understanding the nature of war and how to fight. American military professionals seldom get beyond the physical level of warfare, and then it is warfare taught to us by Napoleon using mass armies and muskets. The mental and moral aspects of war are lost on most Soldiers — with the possible exception of our Special Operations Forces, who have shown a glimmer of understanding in the campaigns in Afghanistan, the Philippines, and a hundred other unadvertised battlegrounds.

We have to learn how to fight the mental and moral wars. Maneuver warfare is a state of mind, a way of thinking. It is the way we can learn to win mentally against terrorism. Moral war is engaging the enemy on a plane quite different from either the physical or the mental, but it is a war that we have to learn how to win. The cult of worldwide terrorism has attacked us in all three planes, and we must respond in all three planes if we are to eradicate the threat to our way of life.

John Poole wants every Soldier and every Marine to understand the importance of fighting this new kind of war on all three planes. We cannot afford to have our Soldiers calling our own allies "Gooks" and treating them as subhuman. We cannot afford to have our infantry act as mere automatons and follow the overabundant supply of doctrinal manuals that tell everybody how we fight — thus making us predictable. We cannot afford to fight 19th Century linear battles of attrition against nimble, adaptive, Ninja-like enemies.

If there is a criticism to be laid at the foot of John Poole, it is that he is too defensive in regard to the predominant role of the NCO Corps in training. Poole is borne out by the recent Army War College monograph on training in the Army, "Stifled Innovation? Developing Tomorrow's Leaders Today, April 2002," by Colonel Leonard Wong, U.S. Army, Retired. Leonard Wong tells it like it is in the Army. John Poole tells it like it is in the Marine Corps. Training has become centralized to the extent that even company commanders have virtually no influence on how their own companies are trained.

The American NCO corps is the envy of every Army in the world, and we are blessed to have such men who still view service as a virtue and training as a commandment. Since the beginning, the NCO corps has been

as the backbone of the American profession of arms.

It is the officer corps of the Army — and particularly the Infantry — that needs to understand Poole’s message and adapt the way we think about war, the way we train for war, and the way we fight.

Follow this excellent thought-provoking book up and read Poole’s newest book: *Phantom Warrior*. Learn how the Al Qaeda — like other fourth-generation warfighters before it — fights.

Somalia on Five Dollars a Day: A Soldier’s Story. By Martin Stanton. Presidio, 2001. 299 Pages. \$24.95, Hardcover. Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Harold E. Raugh, Jr., U.S. Army (Retired).

Somalia on Five Dollars a Day is not an African country tour guide for the impoverished international traveler. It is the interesting anecdotal account of then-Major Martin Stanton’s service as S-3 (operations officer) of the 2d Battalion, 87th Infantry, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) in Somalia during Operation *Restore Hope* in 1992-1993. Soldiers serving in Somalia during that period received imminent danger pay of \$150 per month — or about \$5 a day.

Task Force 2-87 was a component of the Unified Task Force (UNITAF), the transitional force between the United Nations Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I) and UNOSOM II. Stanton led the battalion’s advance party, arriving in Somalia on 13 December 1992. Task Force 2-87 was responsible for humanitarian relief sector Marka, south of Mogadishu.

Stanton is at his best chronicling the “kaleidoscope of different experiences” that he participated in or observed personally, occasionally including “lessons learned” from operations. The first section of the book outlines the organization, role, and responsibilities of an infantry battalion, its staff sections, and subordinate units, plus the battalion’s service in Florida in the wake of Hurricane Andrew. Section 2 narrates the arrival of the battalion in Somalia, including early operations and debacle at a food warehouse at Wanwaylen on 31 December 1992. The remainder of the volume generally chronicles the unit’s subsequent activities in the Shabele Valley

trying to “ensure that relief supplies were distributed to feeding centers, suppress banditry, disarm the warlords, and separate fighting factions.” According to the author, “the whole Somalia mission was a disorganized mess.”

On other issues, however, the author seems on less sure ground. He states that the Somalia operation was the first intervention of the “new world order,” when in fact UN operations in the former Yugoslavia and Cambodia began earlier. In another passage, the author refers to “Khat,” a bush with leaves that contain a type of amphetamine, which are chewed by the natives, stating that it “grows only in parts of Kenya”; it actually grows in numerous eastern African and Arabian Peninsula locations. A helpful six-page “Glossary” is included, but a number of abbreviations and definitions are inaccurate. This book is well illustrated with a number of photographs and three maps, and the appendices include operations plans and the rules of engagement for the unit while employed.

This book was written as “both a history and a remembrance,” as well as a “tribute to the officers and men of Task Force 2-87 Infantry” in Somalia. This personal story of an infantry battalion operating in Somalia, and the unit itself, accomplished its mission. Clearly, the Soldiers in the battalion earned their imminent danger pay of \$5 per day.

How Wars are Won. The 13 Rules of War From Ancient Greece to the War on Terror. By Bevin Alexander. Crown Books, 2002. \$26.95, Hardcover. Reviewed by Colonel Christopher Timmers, U.S. Army, Retired.

Every cadet at West Point and, I assume, pretty much any other college or university with pretensions to producing the officer class of our Armed Services learned the Nine Principles of War. My classmates and I learned these principles by means of a simple abbreviation: MOSS MOUSE. Thus we have: Mass, Objective, Surprise, Simplicity Maneuver, Offensive, Unity of Command, Security, Economy of Force.

Mr. Alexander, without saying so directly, somewhat incorporates these principles into his 13 reasons wars are won. From “Land an Overwhelming Blow,” to “Defend, Then Attack,” he cites historical

examples of how commanders won the day.

His rules, though, are largely confined to individual battles, battles that were won but did not lead to decisive victories and the subjugation of an opposing state. Gustavus Adolphus’s victories in the Thirty Years War did not lead to vanquishing the Holy Roman Empire; the destruction of a Roman army at Cannae in 216 BC did not result in Carthaginian supremacy in the Mediterranean Sea and the destruction of Rome. Indeed, Carthage lost all three of the Punic Wars. The book’s main focus seems to be how battles, not wars, are won.

The observation aside, this book provides an illuminating look at a number of key battles and leaders in the history of western warfare. The author does not overlook the impact of technological advances in weaponry from the Welsh longbow of the middle ages to the destructive effectiveness of the minie-ball in the American Civil War. But one aspect of how wars are won is not dealt with sufficiently, and that is leadership. Leadership as distinct from generalship can be defined as the ability to motivate men to endure hardship, danger, certain loss of life or limb, all for a commander. Commanders like Napoleon possessed generalship; they (he) embraced new tactics or technology and could see results of an intended action before it was executed. But what makes generals most successful and ultimately wins wars is leadership.

Leadership is what keeps armies moving on long campaigns, over great distances, against impossible odds. No weapons systems or tactical brilliance can substitute for it.

Interestingly enough, though, before we even launch into a discussion of any principles of rules, he tells us that these principles are largely a thing of the past. They are not as relevant because of the increasing lethality of high-tech weaponry, which renders large armies on open battlefields extremely vulnerable. An engaging hypothesis, although only one country has such technology (guess who?). Events currently unfolding in the Middle East may vindicate Alexander’s hypothesis, but I don’t know how many unmanned Predator aircraft, satellites, and sensors we will have to oppose massed armor formations and fast-moving mechanized infantry. Only time will tell.