BOOK REVIEWS

***The Black Devil Brigade, The True Story of the First Special Service Force in World War II, An Oral History*. By Joseph A. Springer. Motorbooks International. 344 pages. $29.95.** Reviewed by Harry D. Stumpf.

This extraordinary, timeless reference is destined to become a classic. Like author Cornelius Ryan in *The Longest Day, A Bridge Too Far*, etc., Joseph A. Springer interviewed hundreds of veterans of the fight for this riveting, nonfiction thriller. The story is told by these veterans who made history as members of an elite infantry force the likes of which the world has never seen.

Until now this saga was little known; *The Black Devil Brigade* is the first book thoroughly documenting the events which occurred half a century ago.

The heroes described here (few, if any, of these Soldiers were not heroes) were characters. The recruiters who, in early 1942, initially formed the unit were looking for single men between the ages of 21 and 35 who had completed three years or more of grammar school, within the occupational range of lumberjacks, forest rangers, hunters, northwoodsmen, game wardens, prospectors, and explorers.

It helped if they had experience with explosives and could ski. They came from the armies of Canada and the United States. The result was a selection of the "most rugged from a most rugged generation;" average age: 26. In the vernacular of 2003, they were a brigade-sized outfit of hard-core, ass-kicking, hooah volunteers, led by keen, young officers and NCOs as hard as they were, all commanded by a West Pointer. At the end of their grueling training, they were a cohesive multinational military unit composed of expert marksmen, explosive experts and hand-to-hand night fighters, who were chomping at the bit to meet the enemy. They would see all too much of him.

This book is for academics studying behavior sciences and leadership, familiar with the works of S.L.A. Marshall, John Keegan, and other prominent military scholars; students of history; Soldiers; and all of us who enjoy thriller novels. It will entertain you, make you proud, make you laugh, then make you cry. At the end, it was no longer a multinational unit. They were Forcemen.

The author is the nephew of one of the devils who lost his life in combat at Anzio and is a veteran himself.

***Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East*. By Michael B, Oren. Oxford University Press, 2002. 446 pages. $30 (Hardcover).** Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Harold E. Raugh, Jr., U.S. Army, Retired.

The single most important event to take place in the Middle East since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 was the "Six-Day War" of 1967. This one-sided Israeli victory transformed the modern Middle East and sowed the seeds of strife that led to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the 1973 Yom Kippur War, and the current Palestinian *intifida* (uprising).

Author Michael B. Oren, a former director of Israel's Department of Inter-Religious Affairs, sets the stage by chronicling the complicated and detailed events supposedly leading up to the 1967 war. He considers two incidents in which Palestinian guerrillas planted explosives along the Jordanian border on 31 March 1967 as Syria's provocation of Israel, to which Israel responded by sending armored tractors into the demilitarized zone (DMZ) with Syria in early 1967. On 7 April, Israel again sent tractors into the DMZ, and the Syrians responded with cannon fire. The situation quickly escalated, with the Israeli Air Force being called in to neutralize Syria's long-range artillery – which was arguably not involved in the engagement. The author does not mention that this action, apparently a part of Israel's program to dispossess Arab farmers and illegally seize land in the DMZ, was approved by the Israeli Cabinet on 3 April.

Israel, after making threats for weeks, began the war on 5 June 1967 with a series of purportedly preemptive air strikes that crippled the various Arab air forces. The author does not mention that at the time Israel fabricated reports of Egyptian attacks to justify its own aggression. (These Israeli stories have since been discredited.) The reader is left with the impression that the Arabs were massing for an attack on Israel, rather than mobilizing their forces to defend against Israel's threatened attacks, when Israel attacked to protect itself. This tone permeates the book.

In writing *Six Days of War*, Oren set out to write "the balanced study of the military and political facets of the [1967] war, [and] the interplay between its international, regional, and domestic dimensions." While this book presents the continuing inter-Arab struggle as a source of friction in the Middle East and as a cause of the 1967 War, it is not balanced.

The excellent prose and fast pace of this narrative, seemingly the result of exhaustive research and with pretensions of objectivity, disguises the author's factual and logical omissions. *Six Days of War* misleads readers. It continues to perpetuate a biased account of modern Middle East military and political history that portrays Israel as the innocent victim of Arab aggression and attempts to justify Israel's current practices in the occupied Palestinian territories.

***Cleanse Their Souls: Peace-keeping in Bosnia's Civil War 1992 -1993*. By Monty Woolley. Pen & Sword Books Ltd, 2004. 232 pages. $28.50 (Hardcover).** Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Jim Larsen.

A most relevant book for the deployed or deploying U.S. Army or Marine small unit leader, *Cleanse Their Souls* offers an insightful and frontline perspective of Bosnia's civil war – before the Implementation Force (IFOR) and its successive Stabilization Force (SFOR) — through the eyes of a young British lieutenant. Armed with a woefully inadequate United Nations mandate, overly restrictive rules of engagement, and a complex chain of command at higher echelons, the author brings to light the significant challenges he and his reconnaissance troop of the 9th/12th Lancers faced to maintain the peace in the three-sided civil war between the Bosnian Serbs, Croats, and Muslims. Whether the mission was escorting a humanitarian aid convoy or establishing a check point, he makes no qualms that there was little peace to be maintained, as his unit gradually became mere spectators to the warring factions.

Monty Woolley, a veteran of the first Gulf War and Operation Iraqi Freedom, uses extracts of his detailed diary throughout the memoir to not only offer the reader firsthand accounts of the tragic plight of Bosnia's civilian population, and the numerous dilemmas he faced as a young officer, but also to share his frustrations, successes, failures, and tactical and cultural lessons learned. He is strikingly candid in evaluating his own performance, especially in his leadership and with the struggle to maintain necessary neutrality. Any veteran combat leader will easily empathize with the author as he faces the ambiguity, uncertainty, and potential for mission creep that so often characterize the contemporary operating environment. It quickly becomes obvious to the reader that the author's heart lies initially with the Muslim cause and its people, though he poignantly reveals towards the end of his tour that no side of this war is innocent with all equally committing atrocities.

Following a concise history of the war in the Balkans and several detailed maps, the book begins and ends with the author's second deployment to Bosnia, this time as part of SFOR. He meets with members of the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia who are investigating the infamous Ahmici Massacre of April 1993, during which he was first on the scene in its aftermath — a coincidence that would land the author in The Hague to testify. His testimony would ultimately lead to the conviction of several People Indicted For War Crimes (PIFWC).

Cleanse Their Souls is a well-rounded, easy to read and gripping account of one young officer's deeply personal perspective of the civil war in Bosnia. If the book lacks in any way, it is only with regard to the limited captions describing some of the photos and that numerous lessons learned are scattered throughout the book instead of consolidated in one of the closing chapters. Short of these minor blemishes, this is an essential read for today's deployed or deploying NCO or officer from lieutenant to lieutenant colonel. With the potential of civil war breaking out in Iraq and an arguably tenuous peace between warlords in the new and fledgling Afghanistan democracy, there is no doubt we can learn from Monty Woolley's experiences and apply them to the ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

***The Battle of Ideas in the War on Terror: Essays on U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Middle East*. By Robert Satloff. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2004. 105 pages. $19.95.** Reviewed by Lieutenant Commander Youssef Aboul-Enein, USN.

We often focus on the war fighting aspect of the Global War on Terrorism. Yet even the Defense Secretary in many public statements said that this war will take all elements of national power to win. One area that the United States is making headway is in the battle of ideas. The central question involves raising a generation of young Muslims who are not susceptible to Al-Qaeda's manipulation of Islamic texts and blatant racism. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy is a think tank that dives into many questions pertaining to the formulation of U.S. policy in the Middle East. Its executive director, Robert Satloff, has brought together a series of essays that offer fresh ideas on tackling U.S. public diplomacy in the Middle East.

One of the ideas that Satloff urges is a U.S. administration that raises state-sponsored anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism in discussions with Arab allies. He wisely discusses the need to design country-specific public diplomacy campaigns and not undertake the current efforts of designing a campaign for the Arab or Muslim world. The books also makes a compelling argument for the need to encourage moderate Muslim clerics and scholars or cajole political leaders to convince local religious leaders to stay on message the Bin Laden is not preaching "true Islam." The role of American Muslims is not to demonstrate how well economically they live in the U.S., but more importantly how religious tolerance in American society has fostered new, constructive, and innovative historical and theological explorations in Islam.

Another central thesis of the books is to lay out U.S. policy before the Arab people and introduce them to its complexity and rationale, not apologize for it and expose the fact that Arab masses are being exposed to a caricature of U.S. policies in local media. He advocates taking advantage of Arab media hungry for interviews with U.S. officials who dispel conspiracies and explain policies thereby making it routine in Arab airwaves, print and media. The author writes that there is no single office coordinating and countering anti-American propaganda. An interesting idea proposed is the training and investment of State Department Foreign Service Officers (FSO) to what is known as a 4.0 level of proficiency in Arabic, Dari, Persian and Turkic family of languages to act as media spokespersons for the U.S. in Middle East stations.

A chapter is devoted to strategies to counter raising a new generation of Islamic militants through such ideas as making English-language training affordable for those in middle and lower income families. Satloff identifies that jihadic and Islamic radical groups offer social services as a means of recruitment and political support. Islamic fundamentalist groups make loans, operate healthcare facilities and much more. The U.S. and its allies must counter this with such programs as American School Abroad Support Act (HR 4303) that provides full and partial scholarships for lower income foreign students to attend American sponsored school abroad. The book contains some excellent discussions of how Morocco and its monarch, King Mohammed VI, are attempting to bring moderation in Islamic discourse and counter the fundamentalist Wahabi strain of Islam favored by many jihadists.