

Book Reviews



***The War for Korea: 1945-1950, A House Burning.* By Allan R. Millett. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 348 pages, \$39.95.** Reviewed by Brigadier General (Retired) Curtis H. O'Sullivan.

Some call the Korean War the forgotten war, but even less remembered is the five-year period preceding that event — from the country's liberation from Japan to the attempt by the northern part of the peninsula, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), to reunify the Hermit Kingdom. This is the first in a two-volume history of the Korean War. Highly respected military historian Allan Millett is eminently qualified to fill this gap. He has used sources that will be new to most readers.

To provide the setting, he begins by reviewing the political history of Korea under Japanese rule, 1910-1945, with emphasis on the rising nationalism starting in 1919 when self-determination was sweeping the world. Before the start of the that period, President Teddy Roosevelt had emerged as the greatest American villain in Korean history by sacrificing them for the benefit of Japan in 1905 — and winning the Nobel Prize for it. Hopes were raised by President Wilson at Versailles, only to be dashed. This was followed by a struggle for liberation. The incomplete war in China that started in 1937 and the wider Pacific War starting in 1941 heavily impacted this colonial possession as it was severely exploited. The latter war gave the United States a chance to reverse the betrayal of 1905 and, at the Cairo Conference of November 1943, the final communique that "in due course Korea shall be free and independent." In August of that year, the 38th parallel was established as a field expedient which has survived to this day. Two occupation zones were created, and a continuing friction began.

The Americans moved to make Korea a United Nations responsibility, and that new world body soon established UNTCOK (UN Temporary Commission on Korea). Their efforts were to no avail for unification and

the Republic of Korea declared its independence on August 15, 1948. The formal declaration of the DPRK followed on September 9, 1948. This was followed by growing hostilities between the two entities. A number of critical events occurred in 1949 and early 1950. The PRK built up its armed strength with assistance from its Communist neighbors. American forces departed, to be replaced by an advisory group. The People's Republic of China achieved its independence and was ripe for external adventures against imperial threats. The Soviets tested their first A-bomb and the global balance of power was changed for the next half century. NATO was created and the attention of the superpowers turned in that direction. U.S. Secretary of State made a statement (drafted by George Kennan) that was interpreted as a lack of interest by the U.S. in defending South Korea. Thus, groundwork was laid for an invasion from the North — and it came! The book serves as an object lesson about the unintended consequences when signals are misread on both sides and is useful for anyone wishing to broaden their understanding of the Korean conflict.

Perhaps because it didn't happen, the story doesn't include the planned invasion of Korea. When resistance was anticipated, it was contemplated that an entire field Army would be required, rather than the single XXIV Corps that was used for the occupation. The headquarters chosen was Tenth Army which had been activated in June of 1944 under Lieutenant General Simon Bolivar Buckner for an invasion of Formosa, but was diverted to Okinawa in April 1945, where he was KIA, June 18. He was replaced by General Vinegar Joe Stilwell, who was the first four-star since Pershing in August 1918 to assume command at that grade (others served time on the job and some never made it). In addition to XXIV, he was to have a Commonwealth Corps. Left without a mission, the Tenth was deactivated October 1945, and Stilwell returned to the U.S. for

a brief tour as President of the War Equipment Board before becoming CG of the Sixth Army at the Presidio of San Francisco in 1946 to his death in October.

***The Gift of Valor, A War Story.* By Michael M. Phillips. New York: Broadway Books, a division of Random House, Inc., 241 pages, \$12.95 softcover.** Reviewed by Major Keith Everett, U.S. Army Reserve.

The Gift of Valor is the 2004 story of a Marine who died trying to protect his buddies from an attack while on patrol in Iraq. In January 2007, President Bush awarded the Medal of Honor to Marine Corporal Jason L. Dunham who saved the lives of two Marines when he dove on top of a grenade. Starting from a typical story of a Marine unit bonding as men train together, play together and experience hardship, Phillips develops his story by introducing each Marine involved.

The story of Dunham turns out to be a good primer for what to do when under fire: fire suppression, drag your wounded to safety, and finally, take out the enemy or get the hell out of the area. The basic skills have to be sharp. If you wonder what could happen if your convoy is attacked, this account is a good place to start exploring the "what if" scenarios to prepare you and your Soldiers.

The process of conducting mortar round crater analysis is advanced and is described as a method of pinpointing where the insurgents set up mortar to fire their rounds. This does not help at the time, but after several mortar round incidents, you begin to see traffic patterns in the city.

The second half of the book details how a team of medical Soldiers tried to save Dunham after an initial triage placed him in an area for those expected to die. While not intended as a medical text, this account gives a good idea of how the doctors deal with severe head wounds and the many difficulties of surviving such a wound.

The Gift of Valor is more than just a tribute to a young Marine's selfless sacrifice, it is a glimpse into life and death on the battlefields of Iraq.

***The Uncivil War: Irregular Warfare in the Upper South, 1861-1865.* By Robert R. Mackey. Norman, OK: The University of Oklahoma Press, 2004, 288 pages.** Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Albert N. Garland and Patricia A. Weekley.

Our present experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan tend to blind us to the realities of 19th century irregular warfare conducted by the U.S. Army.

The author is a serving U.S. Army officer who has made an in-depth study of that kind of warfare and how it was conducted during our Civil War. He is quick to disabuse us of making any specific connection between yesterday's irregular war (asymmetric, as we call it today) and today's guiding principles. In studying this book, it is well to keep in mind the author's frequent use of certain terms. But before he starts his campaign studies he spells them out in some detail in pages 6-9. He also stresses the fact that "as a reflection of military thought in the mid-19th century ... the legacy of irregular warfare had a solid basis in historical example and military theory of the time."

I agree with the author's belief that most of the historical studies prepared since 1865 "have been flawed by inadequate definitions of unconventional warfare and a lack of analysis of the relationships and interactions between guerrilla and conventional military operations" during the Civil War.

In clarifying the war behind the lines between 1861 and 1865, Mackey has waded through a mass of material to gain his objective in a convincing manner. After an excellent introduction, which prepares the reader for his chapter organization and writing, Mackey divides his overall area of operations into three distinct parts: Arkansas, Virginia, and Tennessee/Kentucky. For each section, he tells us of the operations by both Confederate and Union forces; the major leaders on both sides, such as Thomas C. Hindman, Marcus

L. Harrison, John Singleton Mosby, John Hunt Morgan, and Nathan Bedford Forrest; and each army's methods of operation. He completes his final step to his objective in a fine wrap-up chapter titled: "The End of the Uncivil War." His chapter notes, bibliography, and index occupy their usual locations.

I heartily recommend this book. And if you are a Civil War buff who believes there is nothing new to be written or learned from this conflagration, read this book and then tell me, honestly, if you still feel the same.

***Humanitarian Intervention, Assisting the Iraqi Kurds in Operation Provide Comfort, 1991.* By Gordon W. Rudd. Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 280 pages, \$34.** Reviewed by Major Keith Everett, U.S. Army Reserve.

Gordon Rudd wrote his doctoral dissertation on the humanitarian intervention to save Kurdish refugees in Iraq in 1991 and converted the dissertation into this book. Rudd, who had served with Special Forces and infantry units in the U.S. Army, taught national security studies and served as a Department of Defense historian after retiring.

After Desert Storm ended, about one million Kurds and other refugees fled their homes from the advancing Iraqi Army in March and April 1991. An estimated 500,000 Kurdish men, women and children fled to the mountains of southern Turkey. The harsh weather conditions and lack of necessary supplies caused much suffering and death. Rudd's account focuses on how the U.S. military organized, planned and deployed to deal with the massive problems that came with such a large number of refugees.

The book reads like a converted dissertation, sometimes hiding the fascinating story of saving refugees behind the dry style of academia. Outstanding content, however, makes this human catastrophe guidebook required reading for officers assigned to work humanitarian or disaster relief missions. The organizational details alone will save precious man-hours in setting up a response effort to similar catastrophes.

The United Nations planning was inadequate considering the huge numbers

involved in the Kurdish refugee situation; prepositioned stocks of food, water, and shelter were wiped out within a week. An alert order was sent on a Friday night to Air Force Major General James Jamerson and by Sunday, the first airdrops of supplies landed in the refugee area. The 10th Special Forces Group was deployed and worked on the immediate problems of water pollution, poor sanitation, and malnutrition in an attempt to stop the high death rate.

The joint task force staff came into the crisis with no formal doctrine and no operational plans for a massive humanitarian assistance operation. The Special Forces were required to walk a fine line in providing security from armed militia groups and bringing humanitarian aid to the refugees.

If you take brief notes while reading Rudd's work, the result will be a rough guideline for a humanitarian intervention, such as:

1. Assign sectors to an SF "A-team;"
2. Organize refugee camps by establishing drop zones, landing zones, identifying the leaders of the group, establishing work parties, establishing food distribution, medical care distribution and basic field sanitation for disposal of waste;
3. Create a clean water source and organize the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide various forms of assistance; and
4. Organize immunization clinics to prevent disease outbreaks as well as organize meetings to pass information, promote security, understanding and the eventual relocation of refugees.

The humanitarian story has many useful pointers throughout such as sending more communication support initially to cut through the chaos and create order. It also discusses the task force's efforts to bring in clean water and identifies which efforts worked better than others.

Humanitarian Intervention is an invaluable guide to running large scale humanitarian operations. Every officer should get a copy, read through it highlighting the lessons learned, and keep it on their professional reference bookshelf at least until retirement. This guide to setting up humanitarian operations could save a lot of trouble and lives during the next humanitarian crisis.



Sergeant Tierney P. Nowland

Above, Sergeant Joshua Wettlin of the 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, talks on the radio during a combined cordon and search mission with Iraqi Army soldiers.

At left, a Soldier with the 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, stands guard outside while fellow Soldiers search a cave during a mission in the Paktika Province of Afghanistan.

Staff Sergeant Justin Holley

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