

BOOKS

Postwar Spies: "A Rollicking Good Yarn..."

Soldiers, Spies, and the Rat Line: America's Undeclared War Against the Soviets by Colonel James U. Milano, USA (Ret.) and Patrick Brogan, Brassey's, 1995. 227 pages. \$23.95.

The shooting's over, a tenuous peace is starting, and an ostensible ally is making threatening overtures. You're assigned to find out what's really going on, and you start with a few defectors from that "ally." When you've gleaned everything from them, you need to find a safe place for them. You can't send them back, you can't send them to the U.S., and you can't hide them in Austria where the KGB would soon find them. You and your inventive staff create a very unorthodox escape route, a "rat line," to South America. And it works. Oh man, does it work!

This is the story of the 7769th Military Intelligence Service Battalion and its commander, Major Jim Milano, from Salerno of WWII to 1949. It had 180 officers and 150 enlisted men, nearly all linguists, and most university graduates. They were smart, hard working, and innovative. And, like the characters in TV's "M.A.S.H.," they were a pretty route-step outfit. Milano ran his unit like a big brother, father confessor, and easy-going boss, all rolled into one. It worked, probably because he was a fine gauge of his troops. Later Milano became the chief of the Operations Branch of the Intelligence Directorate for Austria, but his *modus operandi* never changed.

Milano was assigned a number of standard intelligence functions to perform, but, as the uneasy peace settled over Austria, more specific assignments appeared. There weren't many rules to follow on how to get the information, so the 7769th made its own, along the standard of "get the data first and sort out the rules later." The result was great intelligence collection in an often rowdy and hilarious masquerade. There were some wild and woolly adventures of dubious legality, scary clandestine operations with heart-stopping timing, and frequently unorthodox and questionable decisions. (Years later, General Abrams once told me to be careful about asking permission to do something if a "No" would bother me. Milano adhered to a similar dictum.)

This book is anecdotal in form, like Eisenhower's "Stories I Tell To Friends," with most chapters dealing with a specific incident or problem and some intervening

chapters to set the stage. In the turbulent arena of post-war Austria, Milano and his dedicated but sometimes unscrupulous staff worked with spies, refugees, thieves, and heroes. He tells of the Vatican priest who sold phony visas, Russian defectors who wandered into a bar and started a riot, his bribing a police supervisor with a stolen jeep to retrieve some counterfeit documents, the beautiful Nazi who convinced her Russian lover to defect, and the American general who tried to break into a Russian hospital to rescue a friend's mistress!

This is a rollicking good yarn. It's funny, bawdy, exciting, very entertaining, constantly amazing, and almost unbelievable. But it's true! It tells us how some intelligence operations functioned in the unsettled and makeshift post-war period when smart, young soldiers, under great pressure to deliver essential data, found their way around the most formidable obstacles (which, in Milano's thinking, included the State Department!). It's a fine example of American determination, ingenuity, and humor. And it's great reading!

JOHN R. BYERS
COL, USA, Ret.
Alexandria, Va.

Five Years a Cavalymen, Or Sketches of Regular Army Life on the Texas Frontier, 1866-1871 by H.H. McConnell, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Okla., 1996. 311 pages. \$12.95 (paperback).

The disparity of numbers of soldiers involved was not the only reason that there were hundreds of memoirs written by Civil War participants and only a few by frontier veterans of the Indian Wars. The Regular Army soldiers of the Indian Wars were often illiterate, and few kept any form of diary. Most written material from that phase of American military history has come to us through the writings of a few officers and the wives of officers. Thus, this book by an articulate and perceptive Regular Army enlisted man is unique.

First published in 1889, *Five Years a Cavalymen* is an accurate portrayal of life in the ranks of the Sixth Cavalry on the West Texas frontier following the Civil War. Stationed for five years at Fort Belknap and Fort Richardson, typical frontier posts of

the time, McConnell presents the unglorified story of the officers and his fellow enlisted men in unvarnished, but articulate, terms. He reports on the heavy drinking, the boredom, and the general lack of organization of frontier military life. On the other hand, he demonstrates an appreciation for the environment, an appreciation that led to his settling down in the area when his military service was completed.

Clearly, McConnell was unique. A veteran of three years of Union service in the Civil War, he enlisted in the cavalry following the war. We follow him through training at Carlisle Barracks, on a sea voyage to Texas, and by military convoy to the Texas frontier to join the Sixth Cavalry. He was obviously a soldier of talent, as before long he had been promoted to company first sergeant, a position of much prestige and power. He was an astute observer of human behavior and provides insights into the personalities of the officers and enlisted men who made up the post-Civil War Regular Army.

Any reader seeking the excitement of frequent clashes between the cavalry and the hostiles will be disappointed, for the book is not a recounting of war stories. In fact, it is clear that Sixth Cavalry experiences with the Indians were largely ones of learning of Indian depredations against settlers and then sending out patrols that would return empty-handed. Either McConnell seldom participated in such actions or found them dull compared to daily observances of the environment and his fellow soldiers.

Nevertheless, the book earned a reprinting, largely because it is so unusual to have a witty, well-written recounting of the frontier experience by an interested and intelligent observer from among the ranks.

PHILIP L. BOLTE
BG, USA, Ret.
West Union, S.C.

Mao's Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War, 1950-1953 by Shu Guang Zhang, University Press of Kansas, 1995. 338 pages. \$45.00.

Viewing war from the enemy side is always a difficult task and, in the case of war with a closed communist nation, nearly impossible. Shu Guang Zhang, an associate professor of history at the University of Maryland, offers the western reader per-

haps the first comprehensive view of Chinese strategy-making during the Korean War. Mao's *Military Romanticism* tackles a difficult issue in military theory — the decisiveness of men over machines in war — and succeeds in painting Mao as a romantic who believed that victory did not necessarily go to the technologically-advanced force. Mao used Chinese combat successes in the Korean War as an opportunity to expand and consolidate his political power at home, while uniting the Chinese people against U.S. "imperialism." While science continues to march, there will always be battlefields where combat resembles a "knife fight in a phone booth." *Mao's Military Romanticism* deserves a place on the military professional's bookshelf as a precautionary tale to any force that relies mainly on technology for its fighting power.

MAJ KEVIN B. SMITH
Executive Officer
1st Squadron, 7th US Cavalry
1st Cavalry Division
Ft. Hood, Texas

Tiger Without A Home: The United States Army Ordnance Museum's Panzerkampfwagen VI, Ausführung H1 by Richard Cox, U.S. Army Ordnance Museum Foundation, Inc., Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. 86 pages, \$12.95 (softcover).

If you're into armored vehicle military modeling, this book will give you a wealth of visual and written detail of a Tiger I that fought in the North African Campaign. If you want a great example of meticulous research into vehicle identity, keep this on a shelf. Mr. Cox, a charter member of the U.S. Army Ordnance Museum Foundation, Inc., has written a very smooth monograph about the history of an original Henschel Tiger I from factory to fighting to "internment" at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., and the reasons for its present whereabouts in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Tiger is well illustrated and has ample views of the title vehicle, with additional information that rounds out the picture quite well. A bibliography, photographic credits, footnotes, a comparison chart of the Tiger I versus Allied tanks and tank destroyers, index, and a note about the Ordnance Museum Foundation are found at the end of the book. He clearly explains how the Tiger I was developed, its good points (armor and firepower) and bad (mobility and speed), minor field modifications in North Africa, and how this particular Tiger was found abandoned (but not destroyed) in the U.S. II Corps area of Northern Tunisia and first reported in British (!) notes on June 9, 1943.

However, the unstated goal of the book is an appeal to support a private group dedicated to historical preservation of irreplaceable military artifacts at the Ordnance Museum. With cutbacks in federal funding, wheeled and tracked military history is actually rusting away from lack of facilities to store them out of the elements at Aberdeen. I've driven past Aberdeen's outdoor vehicle display several times; it's impressive, but I didn't realize until I read this book that maintenance, much less restoration, is sorely lacking for those wonderful

monuments of history. I strongly urge those interested in preservation to send a donation to this all-volunteer (no paid staff) organization, whose primary goal is the construction of a facility to house the artifacts. If Mr. Cox's enthusiasm and scholarship are indicative of the dedication of the Foundation's members, there is yet hope for saving mobile history at Aberdeen.

LARRY A. ALTERSITZ
LTC, Field Artillery
Westville, N.J.

Software Review

The Great Generals of the 20th Century by Flagtower Limited, \$29.95. E-mail: 100546.1716@compuserve.com

Minimum system requirements: Multimedia PC with a 486DX33 processor, 8 MB RAM, 2X speed CD-ROM drive, 256-color SVGA, sound card, mouse, 8 MB hard drive space.

"The Great Generals of the 20th Century" bills itself as an entertaining multimedia presentation and a rich, authoritative reference tool. I found it to be professionally produced but remarkably shallow, much like an over-hyped media event: all glitz, little substance. This is rather distressing given the huge amount of space potentially available on the CD-ROM, and the small amount of actual historical content placed on this one.

The main menu of the CD-ROM follows the lives of 15 famous generals by grouping them into three main tracks: World War I, World War II, and Post War (Vietnam, Arab-Israeli Wars, and Desert Storm). As usual, Korea is neglected — although Douglas MacArthur is covered during the WWII section.

Each general's story is told with beautiful graphics and sound clips, and is told as a narrative of his participation in the current war period. To find out about the actual general in question, however, you click on another icon, and the information is somewhat bizarrely broken down into different subtopics such as Resume, Broadcasts, Public Face, Battle Experience, and Pressures.

To illustrate the lack of depth of the program, the resume for Patton contains all of about 180 words spread over three multimedia pages. The accompanying pictures are nice, but the informa-

tion is shallow. Any good encyclopedia would have much more information about all of these generals and warfare.

The CD-ROM contains supplemental factsheets on Technology, Battle Visuals, Personalities, On the Battlefield, Dispatches, and Profile (Profile being another biographical sketch section). This attempt to provide background information is again extremely limited. The Technology section covers Aircraft, Artillery, Equipment, Guns and Small Arms, and Tanks and Transport. The corresponding one page entries number 19, 8, 11, 14, and 23.

The program's strong points are the introductory tutorial and the index, which both perform their functions well. The weak point, as stated, is the totally superficial information. The program looks good, and sounds good, but tells you very little.

The program installs without a hitch, although it ran extremely slowly on my 486-66 VESA local bus with a Diamond Speedstar Pro graphics card and 2X speed CD-ROM. The audio portions would sometimes be jerky while waiting to load. When I used my Pentium 133 with a 6X speed CD-ROM, the program ran much better, but the point remains that the company's minimum requirements should probably list a Pentium 100+ and 4X speed CD-ROM.

I was not really impressed with this program; although it does perform, the actual learning value is small. I would only recommend this program to possibly help inform someone who has little interest in the military, as the multimedia approach may help keep their attention. The serious military professional will gain nothing from this disk.

MAJ GREGORY M. SMITH
G3 Exercise, 3rd Army
Ft. McPherson, Ga.