

BOOKS

Great Photos Enrich New Book on WWII Vehicles

World War Two Armoured Fighting Vehicles & Self-Propelled Artillery by George Forty, London: Osprey Books, 1996. ISBN: 1-85532-582-9. 208 pages, 230 black and white illustrations, 30 color illustrations. 8"x11" hardbound. \$29.95.

This book by military historian and author George Forty is certain to please hobbyists, re-enactors, and students of World War II who are interested in a concise, generously-illustrated survey of WWII fighting vehicles. The book's strength lies in its nearly 300 photographs, many of which are color presentations of vehicles that have been lovingly preserved in museums. To complement this visual collection, Colonel Forty, a specialist in armored warfare and ex-curator of the Tank Museum in Dorset, England, has written succinct, coherent text for this volume, one of three in a series covering WWII military vehicles. Forty discusses AFVs by country of origin, thus dividing the book into nine chapters that adequately cover both Allied and Axis powers. Unlike many books about military hardware, this one is unencumbered by technical jargon. Vehicle specifications are here, but collected in brief tables that do not interfere with the text. An index arranged by vehicle nomenclature easily guides readers interested in a specific vehicle to the proper page.

There is little here that is novel or new to the military historian. Yet beyond the expected collection of reconnaissance cars, self-propelled artillery, and tank destroyers, Forty includes unique vehicles such as Russian armored trains, complete with tank turrets from T-34 and KV-1 tanks; or the Bison, a rolling, concrete pillbox that saw (deservedly) limited service with British forces. Throughout, Forty's narrative reminds readers of the diversity of military vehicles that saw wartime service.

Forty achieves here in breadth what he does not attempt to accomplish in depth. This is not the last word on WWII military vehicles, but neither is it intended to be. Rather, this book is an able survey that is greatly enhanced by the high quality of its photographs.

CPT BRADLEY T. GERICKE
United States Military Academy
West Point, N.Y.

They Were All Young Kids by Aaron C. Elson, Chi Chi Press, Hackensack, N.J. 1996. Softcover, 160 pages, \$10.00.

Subtitled, "The story of Lieutenant Jim Flowers and the first platoon, Company C, 712th Tank Battalion, on Hill 122," this book is a gripping account of one tank platoon's actions on July 10, 1944, on the Cotentin Peninsula in Normandy, France. Lieutenant Flowers' platoon, attached to the 3rd Battalion, 358th Infantry Regiment, 90th Infantry Division, was given the mission of rescuing the 1st Battalion, 359th Infantry, cut off on Hill 122. After attacking through the German lines and linking up with the battalion, 1st platoon breached the German lines again to allow the battalion to break out. All four of the platoon's tanks were destroyed in an anti-armor ambush. Nine of the 20 crewmen were killed. This book is the story as told to the author by the survivors. This book should be in every tanker's professional library, especially the new platoon leader's.

Mr. Elson is a former newspaper editor and author of another book on the exploits of the 712th Tank Battalion, *Tanks for the Memories*. He has spent ten years compiling an oral history of the 712th, motivated by his father's WWII service in the battalion. His father's story is not part of this book, so there is no bias on the author's part.

The book opens with a brief history of the 712th Tank Battalion. Part I is the author's compilation of the story of the fight on Hill 122, based on the interviews with the survivors, which are often contradictory. This brief story is not well-organized and sometimes difficult to follow, especially without an accompanying map at a scale large enough to show the individual tanks (this map is hidden on page 154, in one of the interviews. Mark it; it will help immensely in visualizing the battle). Part II is the heart of the book: the transcripts of interviews with six of the survivors, as well as interviews with a tank commander who was wounded prior to the battle and not present, the brother of one the soldiers killed, the company motor sergeant, and one of the infantrymen rescued by the platoon. These interviews are gems of information, not only on the battle itself, but on the nature of men in combat, the history of the fledgling armored force, and of lessons learned at

the lowest level of tactical combat. Part III contains additional transcripts of interviews with a wardmate of Lieutenant Flowers in England, the battalion surgeon who first treated Lieutenant Flowers, who lost parts of both legs, and the text of Lieutenant Flowers' original account of the battle in support of his recommendation for the Congressional Medal of Honor.

There are minor mistakes, such as the author defining "TOE" as Table of Operation. A photo which allegedly illustrates the story of how some soldiers ate under their tank under mortar fire is actually a photo of a T-34, and the unorganized first chapter don't detract fatally from the survivors' gripping stories. Books on armored warfare at the platoon level are difficult to find. This one is worth grabbing while you can.

They Were All Young Kids is self-published and available for \$10 plus \$2.50 postage and handling from Mr. Elson at 1-800-807-8265.

CPT JERRY A. HALL
Fort Knox, Ky.

Follow Me I: the Human Element in Leadership by MG Aubrey "Red" Newman, USA (Ret.), ISBN: 0-89141-612-9, Copyright 1981, Presidio Press. 1997 edition, \$15.95, softcover.

Follow Me II: More on the Human Element in Leadership by MG Aubrey "Red" Newman, USA (Ret.), ISBN: 0-89141-613-7, Copyright 1992, Presidio Press. 1997 edition, \$15.95, softcover.

Follow Me III: Lessons on the Art and Science of High Command by MG Aubrey "Red" Newman, USA (Ret.), ISBN: 0-89141-614-5, Copyright 1987, Presidio Press. 1997 edition. \$15.95, softcover.

"Get the hell off the beach!... get up and get moving — Follow me!" commanded Colonel Aubrey "Red" Newman as he led the soldiers of the 34th Infantry Regiment across Leyte's Red Beach on October 20, 1944. That moment in time, captured in the famous "Follow Me" statue, has stood for the past 53 years as the representation of the essence of leadership. This year, Presidio Press has reprinted *Follow Me I, II, and III*, three books previously written by

MG Newman which capture his thoughts on the art and science of leading soldiers — thoughts based upon a career of nearly 40 years that included three company commands, three regimental commands, and division command. These books deserve a place in every leader's professional library.

When MG Newman entered West Point July 1st, 1921, Douglas MacArthur served as Superintendent of the Military Academy. The Army has changed during the last few years, and in many ways it is a very different Army than the one about which Newman writes. The impact of technological advances upon military affairs, downsizing and budget constraints, the advent of an all volunteer force, changes in organizational design, the conduct of peace operations, the expanding role of women in the Army, a new world order, shorter careers, fewer opportunities for command, unknown threats, and a host of other topics that occupy today's professional journals and discussions would seem to render the advice of a leader who served long ago — just a bit after WWI, during WWII, and the Korean War to the early sixties — quite dated and of marginal utility. In fact, the opposite is true, for two reasons. First, the focus of these books is the unchanging nature of the human dimension in leadership. Soldiers remain soldiers. Second, Newman's early military experience was, in many ways, quite like that of a lieutenant in 1997. He also served during cycles of buildup, drawdown, technological revolution, peace, war, and societal change.

Each book in the "Follow Me" series is made up of short chapters that teach specific lessons regarding the human element in leadership and lessons about other facets in the life of a professional soldier. MG Newman, drawing on his personal experience, uses anecdotes, both humorous and serious, with great skill to prepare the reader for learning points which conclude each chapter. His writing style is clear and conversational, giving each book the coaching tone of a mentor, rather than that of a teacher presenting a lecture. Many of the observations in "Follow Me" will be familiar to military readers as they are collected from the hundreds of articles MG Newman published in *Army Magazine*, *Infantry Journal* and *Armed Forces Journal* over the years.

The three primary topics covered in *Follow Me I* are: command presence, command techniques, and command in battle. *Follow Me II*, also divided into three major sections, details: company level topics, principles for all levels of command, and reflections on combat situations. The final volume, *Follow Me III* is organized with a section covering company grade officers, a section about field grade officers, and a third discussing general officers.

General Newman's counsel regarding the nature of the military profession and the requirement to always regard duty, honor, and country as the motivating force of service remains valid today. He emphasizes the

necessity for commanders to earn the trust and confidence of soldiers by personal exemplification of compassion, competence, and dedication to the core values of the profession of arms. He provides valuable insight regarding the skills required of an officer to achieve a successful career and the common pitfalls that a leader can avoid along the way. His discussion of preparation for command is excellent. Newman outlines his deliberate process of self-assessment and reflection on past experience and the duties at hand, which allowed him to determine, in advance, the goals, objectives and leadership style that would prepare him to assume command with absolute confidence.

Every new leader entering the profession of arms will benefit from Newman's observations and can put his advice to good use throughout a lifetime of service. More experienced leaders will enjoy the series as well, and will find General Newman's insight and steadfast focus on the human dimension of leadership on the mark.

LTC CHIP WENTZ
Ft. Knox, Ky.

The Battles of the Somme by Martin Marix Evans, Motorbooks International Publishers, Osceola, Wis., 1996. 95 pages. \$19.95 (hardcover).

On July 1, 1916, elements of the British Expeditionary Force under the command of General Sir Douglas Haig went "over the top" and began the ground attack phase of the Battle of the Somme. By day's end, the estimated losses to the BEF totaled approximately 60,000, prompting Winston Churchill to subsequently refer to this action as "the greatest loss and slaughter sustained in a single day in the whole history of the British Army." There is no question that there exists already a plethora of studies regarding military operations on the Western Front. One could rightfully ask why we should welcome yet another to the collection. I submit, however, that Martin Evans' work is a welcome addition to the historiography for two reasons. First, by reviewing the actions of multiple units in several locations, he reminds us that the carnage was not limited to just the first day, but extended over a period of time and a series of battles. Secondly, and to my mind most importantly, his objective is not to present a new interpretation of already recognized and accepted data (his narrative lacks citations of any type and his bibliography is admittedly "a personal one,") but rather the depiction of the human side of this battle to a level that I have not seen in previous studies. His inclusion of contemporary photographs, maps, and eyewitness accounts serves to remind the reader that each and every one of the thousands of casualties was a real human being, and the sense of humanity and reality that the

author brings to his telling of this tragic story is the essence of the value of this work. In sum, Martin Evans has succeeded in that most difficult of historical endeavors: he has added to our understanding of a timeworn topic by telling the story of the Somme with a balance of statistical accuracy leavened with vivid photographs and poignant eyewitness accounts. This book will prove a valuable addition to the collection of beginning students of WWI as well as for those who find themselves in a position to lead discussions or teach on the topic of WWI operational maneuver stalemate on the Western Front.

MAJ DAVID P. CAVALERI
Ft. Leavenworth, Kan.

Fight or Flight, An Inspiring History of Courage Under Fire – True Battlefield Accounts of Extraordinary Acts at the Moment of Truth by Geoffrey Regan, Avon Books, New York, N.Y. 1996, 277 pp. \$12.50 (paperback).

Nearly all soldiers are afraid in battle. Only the good ones can control their fear. In *Fight or Flight*, Geoffrey Regan explains how this control, or lack of it, causes some men to fight and others to flee in combat. If this sounds interesting, this book is for you.

The first section explains why soldiers fight when the consuming passion is to "lie in a ditch and stay there until it is all over." This part is reminiscent of Marshall's *Men Against Fire* and Keegan's *The Face of Battle* in its earnest attempt to get at the core of why men fight or flee.

Regan writes with great understanding of those soldiers "who could never get out of the ditch" and join their comrades in battle. A large portion is devoted to explaining why PVT Eddie Slovik and others failed when placed under fire. Either because of lack of discipline, training, or even individual personality flaws, these soldiers should never have been put in harm's way.

Seventeen historical vignettes of men in combat make up the book's second section. This is where *Fight or Flight* is at its best. First-hand battlefield accounts from the lowest ranks are fascinating for their sincerity and horrific detail. Unfortunately, only about half of the vignettes include substantial personal observations from the soldiers involved, and the ones on the British Army appear more thoroughly researched than the rest. Still, each one offers a different lesson and reinforces the author's earlier conclusions.

Fight or Flight is easy reading and offers many useful lessons – and warnings – to those interested in why soldiers choose to fight rather than flee.

CPT CRAIG A. COLLIER
Ft. Irwin, Calif.