

Books

Innovating at the JRTC

The Battle for Hunger Hill by Daniel P. Bolger, Presidio Press, Novato, Calif., 1997. Hardcover, 363 pages, \$24.95.

Lieutenant Colonel Bolger's sixth book continues his trend of producing highly valuable works which belong on every professional's bookshelf. This time around, he relates his experiences and lessons learned from two rotations to the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) while he commanded 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division. He writes simply and clearly, explaining acronyms and soldiering in such a way that a civilian with little or no military background could pick up his book and follow along. More importantly, his work differs from many self-aggrandizing authors in that he is brutally honest about both his mistakes and successes. He points out the many failures of his first rotation, from his own capture to the failure to evacuate casualties (which gave the book its name: Hunger Hill was the location of the casualties who only received one Meal Ready to Eat (MRE) a day until they were recovered).

What makes the book even more valuable is LTC Bolger's straightforward writing style. He tells it like it is, and if he doesn't like something or agree with a certain doctrine, he doesn't show any niceties. Some traditionalists might call his attacks on the planning process blasphemous, but few can argue with success.

Perhaps LTC Bolger's most important offering is his plethora of lessons learned on everything from leadership to the planning process to tactics. Many of his lessons and solutions are so creative that he can be called a visionary. He developed ways to simplify complex concepts for soldiers, and used unconventional methods to overcome obstacles in the way of success. Some particularly notable concepts are a very good mnemonic for the rules of engagement and his "ten commandments for JRTC," which are a guide on what to do when no guidance is available. LTC Bolger also attacks the current planning process, called the Deliberate Decision Making Process, as futile and totally inefficient. During his second rotation, he forced his staff to adhere to Patton's premise, that a good order is one which fits on one page, is readily understood, and has a sketch. During his second rotation, his staff established two tactical command posts (TACs), as opposed to one large Tactical Operation Center (TOC). With two TACs, he was able to establish a viable rest plan (which is a monument in itself), and when the situation dictated, use one TAC to control the battle while the second planned for a future mission. To further assist in controlling the battle, he used the excess members from the old TOC as white teams, basically honest brokers who accompanied his line companies with the purpose of reporting to the TAC. This allowed

commanders to control the fight, rather than be tied to the radio giving situation updates.

LTC Bolger also provides good examples of empowerment and leadership. He assigned an S5 who commanded a task organization called Team Golf, based around a civil affairs team, a loudspeaker team, and a counterintelligence agent. This group was highly successful in both gathering intelligence and preventing the local population from assisting the enemy. He and his command sergeant major also espoused the lesson of "leadership by subtraction," eliminating poor quality or non-deployable soldiers.

The book's one major flaw is the extremely poor quality and quantity of its maps. They were too small and not detailed enough to allow the reader to visualize what was happening. Additionally, each map covers too many events, confusing the reader and causing him to have to constantly flip back many pages to try to follow along as the battle progressed.

LTC Bolger's *The Battle for Hunger Hill* is a brilliant low intensity conflict match to his book covering his National Training Center experiences, *Dragons at War*. All military leaders, regardless of branch, will benefit from LTC Bolger's book, especially from his creative, unconventional solutions to overcoming tactical problems. More leaders should follow his example and be willing to experiment with solutions which are not doctrinal, or do not follow the conventional wisdom. In particular, Armor or Cavalry leaders will benefit both from his insights into fighting a low intensity conflict and from LTC Bolger's willingness to use the unconventional approach.

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Preserved Tanks in Russia by Trevor Larkum and Jim Kinnear, Published by Armour Archive, PO Box 440, Northampton, NN3 9JL, England. ISBN 0-9523293-4-4. Price £8.95, direct postage £1.05 in the UK, £2.05 overseas.

At one time, any information on armored vehicles in Russia was only available by chance, through official news agencies, or from Western intelligence sources. That has now changed, but the new "openness" does not help anyone wanting to know what the huge area covered by the former Soviet Union has to offer the AFV enthusiast. Some details on the major collections have appeared, some of it useful and some confusing, but a definitive guide is welcome.

Trevor Larkum has added this account to his Armour Archive series to list those tanks which a visitor to Russia can expect to see. In asso-

ciation with Jim Kinnear and several enthusiasts in the CIS and elsewhere, he has produced this listing of what is where. As can be expected, a large part of the content covers the NIIIT collection at Kubinka, detailing over 250 tanks, and another 40 at the Central Armed Forces Museum in Moscow. That still leaves another 300 elsewhere, in large and small collections or individually as memorials to past battles or exploits. And this is just tanks and self propelled guns on tank chassis; many other infantry vehicles are briefly listed but are not included in the totals.

Each of the book's geographical sections has an introduction to the location and in many cases background of the major Second World War battles which led to memorials and museums being set up. Photos show something like half the vehicles, although the small size of these only allows a general view. Another drawback is in the movement of vehicles; some pass from collection to collection from time to time, and others are removed for possible restoration or sale abroad. One arrived on display when intercepted by customs officials as it was being smuggled — if that is the right word? — abroad, and another's whereabouts was uncertain at the time of going to press as it is rumored to have been stolen.

Coverage of each vehicle gives details as to what mark it is, and also its current state of preservation. A number have been restored, often with more enthusiasm than knowledge, while others are just rotting away. This may well save many wasted hours going to visit a vehicle which is not what it is expected to be. We even have faked vehicles, with KVs being made up from IS-2s and T-34s produced for film work or display using later components.

Not just Russian-built vehicles are included; most people will be surprised at the range of vehicles displayed. While there are many T-34-85s and IS-2s and 3s, there are a remarkable number of British Mk V heavy tanks and WW2 Japanese vehicles, as well as many contemporary German types. Some of the wartime non-Russian vehicles were captured or obtained through Lend-Lease, but the story of how some later tanks arrived where they now are would make a book in itself. One drawback, which some may find annoying, is that while German WW2 vehicles are listed, anyone wanting details of them is referred to the two previous volumes of German tanks. This does save duplication, however, and these guides are valuable to the enthusiast.

As with any guide, this is a snapshot of things as they were when the information was collected. The author admits that listing all the vehicles is an impossible task, but he has done a good job of trying, and his requests for new information show that he is interested in keeping the listing up to date. In the meantime, anyone wanting to know more about tanks preserved in Russia, or planning a visit

there to seriously tank hunt, or just happen along a tank or two when there as a tourist, will find this an invaluable guide.

PETER BROWN
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The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern War edited by Charles Townshend, Oxford University Press, New York, N.Y., 1997. 354 pages. \$49.95 hardcover.

"Oxford Illustrated History" of anything conjures at least three words to my mind: good, definitive, and expensive! *Modern War* is, of course, all of these, and more. It is a compilation of work by historians across the world that traces the evolution of modern war and analyzes its elements. *Modern War* is based on the supposition that modern war and modern society are inextricably linked. It attempts to answer the following questions: How has war shaped society and vice-versa? How has war changed over the centuries due to technology? How and why is war waged today, and how and why will it be waged tomorrow?

Part I, The Evolution of Modern War, is a primer on the history of warfare from approximately the 1600s on. Part II, Elements of Modern War, analyzes the nature of warfare in the same time period. This is the heart of the book, with chapters on technology, sea and air warfare, the social impact of war, women in war, and postmodern war. All of these subjects were a refreshing read for a company grade officer whose focus is generally echelons below anything considered in this book, most notably the last chapter on postmodern war. Some disturbing (for an armor officer) assertions on the capabilities of conventional versus "subconventional" (unconventional) forces are made, not without historical evidence. This book left me with the feeling that great challenges are ahead, and that we cannot afford the too often made historical mistake where we "train for the last war." *Modern War* is a good book, well-documented, illustrated, and edited. At \$49.95, I recommend it for serious historians; for the rest of us, five minutes spent in the library on the last chapter will definitely give you food for thought.

CPT JERRY A. HALL
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The Encyclopedia of the Third Reich edited by Christian Zentner and Freidemmann Bedürftig, Da Capo Press, New York, N.Y., 1997, 1,162 pages. \$50.00 paperback.

I found this exhaustive study impressive, mainly due to its all inclusive format. Almost anyone or anything related to or affected by

National Socialist Germany can be found described here, with over 3,000 entries written by 36 of Germany's best historians. Going beyond its primary focus on 1933-45 Germany, it also covers other nations and their citizens who were touched by the Third Reich, whether through occupation, alliance, resistance or collaboration. Although I wouldn't classify it as a "picture book," there are over 1,200 photos, posters and drawings, adding a visual dimension and giving a face to the many interesting, and in some cases obscure, biographies.

The vast array of subject entries range from Marlene Dietrich to Volkswagen, from the "Bullet Decree" of 1944 to *Signal Magazine*. The Encyclopedia also covers lesser-known aspects of life under Hitler's regime, including state control of entertainment and entertainers who stayed in Germany, marriage laws, and the roles of women.

Originally published as a hardcover, two-volume set a few years ago, this one volume monolith is an invaluable library addition to anyone interested in this most infamous period of German history.

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Czolg w Boju (Tanks in Battle) No. 4, Ciezki Czlog KW (KV Heavy Tank) by Janusz Magnuski, Pelta Press (Poland), 1997. 56 pages, \$12.00. ISBN 83-85314-12-1.

Pancerne/Armor in PROFILE No. 1 by Janusz Magnuski (Polish text) and James Grandson (English text), Pelta Press (Poland), 1997. 32 pages, \$8.00. ISBN 83-85314-11-3.

The advantages of these books are their fresh material, new color, and English summaries. Disadvantages include the fact that not all material is translated. But these books are recommended for modelers, armor buffs, and Soviet fans.

Since 1989, there have been a number of changes in Eastern Europe, and one of the best, for those of us interested in Soviet and other Eastern European armor, is the rise of publishers and model companies east of the Oder River. Poland has been among the most active of the former Warsaw Pact states, and Pelta - Poland has emerged as one of the leaders in this area.

Pelta covers a wide range of items, including all sorts of military and modeling subject books. It is the umbrella agent for at least 26 smaller model kit producers in Russia, Moldova, Poland, and Ukraine. They are exported under trade names like RPM and Plastyk, but the kits and books are also available directly from Pelta via direct mail or the Internet.

The two books listed above were provided by Pelta - Poland as review samples, and they bode well for the future of the company. Most armor modelers and historians are familiar with the works of Janusz Magnuski, and he continues to do excellent research into Eastern European armor subjects and provide good, solid works about his subjects. The first book listed above is a new history of the KV-series tanks, from the SMK and T-100 through the KV-1, KV-2, KV-1s, and KV-85. New photos of the various intermediate prototypes are included, such as the frankly weird, multigunned KV-6 and KV-7, and the unhappy KV-13 "T-34 killer" which the Kirov plant was sure would be the standard Soviet medium tank from 1943 on.

Unfortunately, while contributors to the book include Russian Mikhail Baryatinskiy, Bob Fleming from the UK, and Steve Zaloga, all of the text is in Polish. This would be very disappointing if Pelta was not quite aware that money is to be made in English-speaking countries, and as a result, a very handy English synopsis of the book is included. This covers the core of the text, basic technical parameters, and translations of the captions of all 132 photos and drawings. There is also a full-color cross-section of the vehicle by Krzysstof Cieslak in the center of the book, which is handy for interior detail fans.

If you are a "Klim" fan, this is a good book to pick up and worth the money. The only thing I miss is that, while I read Russian, I do not read Polish. However, due to some commonality of Slavic languages, I can pick up a few words, and some of the text seems to cover the shenanigans of the various personalities at the Leningrad Kirov Works. I would like to have seen that in English!!

The second volume is the first in a new series of general armor profiles and covers five different vehicles in short overviews: the British Infantry Tank Mk. III Valentine, the Polish 10TP cruiser tank, the Soviet SMK heavy tank, the Hungarian 40M Turan, and the French SOMUA 35. Each tank rates six to seven pages, either 1/35 or 1/48 plans, and a color foldout cross-section. Unlike the KV book, this one uses parallel Polish and English texts. While the subjects are not covered in tight focus, the material is clean and neat, and the plans and color views are handy for modelers. This should be a "modelers' companion" series, and the reasonable price is hard to beat for value.

All in all, these are worthwhile efforts, and should be available from either Pelta or larger stores in the U.S. and Europe. Thanks to Marek Machala of Pelta for the samples and catalogue. By the way, Pelta's address is Pelta-Poland, 16 Swietokrzyka Str., 00-050 Warsaw, Poland. Telephone/FAX are 0048-22 827-66-14 or 826-91-86. Their Internet site is at <http://www.pelta.com.pl> for those with online access.

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