

REVIEW

His Career Spanned Three Wars

Honorable Warrior: General Harold K. Johnson and the Ethics of Command by Lewis Sorley. University Press of Kansas, 1998. 364 pages, \$39.95.

Very few soldiers actually get a chance to influence the decisions of a nation during crucial periods of peace and war. General Harold K. Johnson was a rare individual who participated in World War II, the Korean War, and the war in Vietnam. What kind of soldier survives the trials and tribulations of the Bataan Death March, the rigors of fighting on the Korean peninsula, and the divisive nature of the Vietnam War? Author Lewis Sorley emphatically argues that it is an honorable warrior, a man who came to his enormous responsibilities by traveling a "road of austerity, testing, and faith."

Sorley's second biography of a Vietnam-era Army Chief of Staff is enormously successful and instructive (he is also the author of *Thunderbolt*, the biography of General Creighton Abrams). Sorley is careful to balance the early career and trials of the young Johnson with the momentous events and decisions that would haunt his years as Chief of Staff of the Army from 1964-1968. The result is insightful, dynamic, and compelling.

Born in Bowsmont, North Dakota, on 22 February 1912, Harold K. (Johnny) Johnson graduated from West Point in 1933. When the Japanese invaded the Philippines in December 1941, he was the operations officer for the 57th Infantry (Philippine Scouts). Fighting in the valiant but doomed effort to stop the Japanese, Johnson survived the Bataan Death March, and more than three years in captivity. When the war in Korea erupted in June 1950, Johnson found himself commanding the 3d Battalion, 8th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division, rising quickly to command the 5th Cavalry Regiment during 14 months of tough combat. Rising steadily through the ranks, Johnson was selected as Army Chief of Staff by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara in the summer of 1964. It is difficult to imagine a man more qualified to lead the Army at that time.

Sorley's themes throughout this superb volume are of Johnson's moral convictions and how his impeccable integrity guided him throughout his remarkable career. In Cabanatuan prison camp, Johnson was appointed commissary officer, a powerful position that he never used to his own advantage. His own self-denial and sacrifice in the war differed markedly with the "what's in it for me" attitude he encountered in the United States after liberation. Even though Johnson felt "let down" when there were no reinforcements for the Philippines, Sorley points out that he did not use it as an excuse for self-pity: "We sign up



with the basic knowledge that we may be called upon to defend the interests of our country wherever it might be." For Johnson, that next critical assignment was the command of a battalion and then a regiment in the Korean War. There was very little glory in his 14 months in Korea, with the burdens of command causing Johnson to spend "a great many nights on [his] knees" in prayer.

Of the greatest interest for most readers, however, are the years 1964 to 1968, when Johnson served as Chief of Staff of the Army. McNamara's account of those years, *In Retrospect*, describes Johnson as a soldier with "an iron will, extraordinary toughness of mind and spirit, and a fierce integrity." (p. 176) Sorley shows the reader that this description is true. How then, could Johnson support policies that were so tragically flawed and doomed to failure? Sorley builds a compelling portrait of a man in turmoil; a man caught in the vortex of a war that was consuming the Army, the institution he had served since 1933. Convinced that General Westmoreland's search and destroy tactics were not working, and could not work in Vietnam, Johnson was "unable to get them changed." The author points out that even though he disagreed with what was going on in Vietnam, as Chief of Staff, Johnson found himself validating and praising these same efforts. This dilemma leads to one of the most tantalizing episodes of the Vietnam War. Were the Joint Chiefs, and Johnson in particular, willing to resign *en masse* in protest to the administration's handling of the war?

Sorley answers the question about the chiefs of the other services tangentially, but he sheds new light on Johnson's feelings concerning such a monumental decision. In an interview with the author, General Earle G. (Bus) Wheeler's widow opines that it was Johnson who first talked of resigning to protest the conduct of the war. Wheeler, it seems, talked Johnson and the other Chiefs out of

such a drastic move, likening it to a "mutiny." As for Johnson himself, later in his life he confided that he made a great mistake in not resigning, calling his decision to remain as Chief of Staff and not resign as "a lapse in moral courage." The great strength of this book and Sorley's account of Johnson's life does not lie with this episode or the Vietnam War, but in the many applicable lessons that are to be gleaned from nearly every chapter.

Johnson delineated three insights he gained from being a commander: 1) If you could command successfully at battalion level, you could command larger formations successfully; 2) Foremost among commanders was the welfare of the men they commanded; and 3) The commander has an obligation to improve his technical and tactical competence. During his tenure as commandant of the Command and General Staff College, Johnson urged his students to, "challenge the assertion," alluding to his own mistrust of the idea that the Strategic Air Command and nuclear weapons could deter war. Johnson came to the conclusion that "bombs don't accomplish very much in the end." Are we seeing the same sort of "strategy" today? Johnson was adamant that it was impossible to solve problems on the ground by merely over-flying resistance on the ground.

Sorley has done a magnificent job of detailing the life of a remarkable American and soldier. He epitomized the ideals we all look for in ourselves and in the officers of the armed forces. Johnson himself summed up the professional values that are essential in any officer, the 4 I's: Intelligence, Imagination, Initiative, and Integrity. General Harold K. Johnson lived those values. Lewis Sorley's book is a testament to this outstanding soldier and American patriot.

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The Serbs: History, Myth, and the Destruction of Yugoslavia by Tim Judah, Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn., 1998. 320 pp. Maps, photos, notes, appendices, and index, ISBN: 0-300-07113-2 (cloth), 0-300-07656-8 (paper). \$35.00 (cloth), \$16.00 (paper).

That the interests of the European states and America in the 20th century have been bookended by the barbaric actions of members of the Balkan states makes Mr. Judah's book about Serbian history both timely and an interesting read, especially since problems in Kosovo are once again on the international stage.

Mr. Judah has organized the book in roughly chronological order, starting with a summary of how the Balkans were settled in the sixth century by Slavic raiders who occupied deserted areas that had been depopulated by warfare. Indeed, the theme of great migrations of people is the principal story of this book, as throughout history the Serbs, Croats, Bulgarians, and other tribes fled from each other or whatever conquering army was on the march. He traces the history of the Serb nation from its humble beginnings as the Serbs made the transition from raiders to settlers and became separated from the Croats in geography, religion, and dialect, as the Orthodox Church worked with the Serbs and the Roman Catholic Church proselytized the Croats. This division would have repercussions into modern times. But, for the Serbs, Mr. Judah writes that the Orthodox Church became the preserver of Serbian culture during its subjugation by the Ottoman Empire.

Before the Ottoman conquest, however, Serbia reached the zenith of its power in the ancient world with the accession of Stefan Nemanja in the 1160s, who created a Serbian Empire that was to last for two centuries and become a major military power in the Balkans. The Nemanjic Kingdom came to an end at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 between the Serbs and the Ottoman Turks and the country was overrun in 1459.

Then, for approximately the next 400 years, Serbia was tributary to the Ottoman Empire, but the Orthodox Church preserved the legend of the Nemanjic Dynasty, and the Battle of Kosovo entered into folklore. Indeed, as Mr. Judah rightly points out, the importance of the Battle of Kosovo cannot be overemphasized as a cultural marker for the Serbians. The assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo that launched World War I was carried out on the 525th anniversary of the Kosovo Battle and, closer in time, it was on the 600th anniversary in 1989 that Slobodan Milosevic became president of Serbia and launched his country into the disastrous war of 1991-95.

After he brings the reader to the modern era, Mr. Judah then explores the unification of Yugoslavia under Marshal Josip Tito, how the country fell apart in the '80s, and the Serbian actions that led to the war in Bosnia and Croatia and the eventual U.N. intervention. Throughout all of this, Mr. Judah explains the

great migrations of people into and out of the Balkan countries as they conquered or were in turn conquered and the brutal acts that conquerors perpetrated against their foes, so that the atrocities committed in the most recent conflict are seen to be but the latest expression of nationalized hatred.

The chief fault of the book is that it assumes a more than casual knowledge of Balkan history. Indeed, the non-historian reader can soon become bogged down in the names of historical persons and their various alliances. The maps are not very well done either. They are lacking in terrain references and are oddly placed in the text. I also felt that Mr. Judah's extensive use of population charts in the text when talking about the migration of people was distracting.

Overall, though, *The Serbs* is a very well-researched and well-written book. Mr. Judah was the Balkans correspondent for the *London Times* and *The Economist* who covered Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, and the former Yugoslavia, so he is very knowledgeable about his subject. He injects many personal stories into the narrative from interviews with the principal players and the common people in order to provide a comprehensive picture of what happened in Serbia and Bosnia. I would recommend this book as an excellent reference to explain the motivation and actions of the Serbian leaders and people.

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Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War: A Political, Social, and Military History, edited by Spencer C. Tucker, ABC-CLIO, Inc., 1998. 3 Volumes, 1196 pages. \$275.00, hardcover.

The United States' longest, costliest, and most divisive war, the Vietnam War, can be viewed as our national epic, its story our own *Iliad*. And now, amidst the popular outpouring of memoirs, histories, novels, and films, comes this largest and most comprehensive presentation of a complex history that will forever be known as the Vietnam Experience.

The editor of this encyclopedia, Spencer Tucker, is a noted historian who teaches military history at the Virginia Military Institute. He has written nine books on military and maritime history, including subjects on the Civil War and World War I. Now he spearheads the efforts of 135 contributors in a scholarly and well-researched work that details the full spectrum of the Vietnam War and its impact, politically, socially, and militarily, on Vietnam and America. Most of the contributors are American academics, with a few military personnel and Vietnamese authors.

These three handsome volumes contain over 980 entries, A to Z, with over 10,000 separate references listed in the index. Maps, photos, charts, tables, a bibliography, a chronology of events, and a useful glossary all complement the historical and biographical entries. In addition to covering people, places, events, weapons, tactics, strategies, battles,

policies, and attitudes, the encyclopedia also presents over 200 documents (in Volume III) revealing controversial French and American policy, and the gradual evolution of the Vietnamese revolutionary movement.

Following a disappointingly self-serving, "I told you so" foreword by Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, Tucker provides a short but succinct overview of Vietnamese history as a most suitable introduction into the whole subject of the Indochina conflict. To fully understand the scope of the war, Tucker has wisely included numerous entries reflecting early French colonial rule, and even earlier contentious relations with neighboring China. He correctly states that "history cannot be understood in isolation" and that "if any war clearly demonstrates the need to study history, it is the Vietnam conflict."

With such an expansive subject, viewed through time, perspective, and the hindsight of history, it is no surprise that some biographical entries are revealing as much for what is written as what is not. President Johnson's entry is plain vanilla, with no mention of his being the Great Meddler in the tactical conduct of the war. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara is tagged with much of the responsibility for the war's failure, for he "misunderstood the nature of the conflict." Ho Chi Minh receives high praise as a revolutionary and as a statesman, while President Clinton is pilloried for his collegiate anti-war sentiments and for dodging the draft. General Westmoreland's bio seems balanced, but is too brief to really appreciate the man. And North Vietnam's General Giap is correctly depicted as a master of tactics, strategy, and logistics, but also as a political uncertainty that the Hanoi government kept a close eye on. Lesser, more colorful figures appear, too, such as Lucian Conein, a CIA spook code-named Black Luigi, who operated an intelligence network in North Vietnam.

The superb entries on battles, artillery and artillery doctrine, riverine and naval warfare, the massive U.S. air war, and weapons are supplemented by information little known to the public. Defoliation efforts involved not just Agent Orange, but five other color-coded, toxic herbicides. Intelligence and counter-intelligence entries reveal the basic "cloak and dagger" operations, plus the use of secret Spike Recon Teams, Hatchet Forces, SLAM companies (seek, locate, annihilate, monitor), and clandestine Road Watch Teams deep within Laos. Several of the documents in Volume III show critical U.S. involvement in the bloody coup that toppled the Diem regime in 1963. And, while the subject of atrocities is covered, there is no entry on military justice or the laws of war and their application during the war.

This encyclopedia provides a clear, well-organized approach to the study of the complete history of the Vietnam War. However, since it is burdened by the encyclopedic style of writing and its A to Z format, it would be most useful as a companion to any number of excellent historical narratives such as Stanley Karnow's *Vietnam* (1984), Phillip Davidson's

Vietnam at War (1988), or Wilbur Morrison's *The Elephant and the Tiger* (1990).

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Taking the Offensive: October 1966 to October 1967 by George L. MacGarrigle, Center for Military History, U.S. Army, Washington, D.C., 1998; 443 pages, maps, bibliography, index; \$44.

This book is one of a series on the Vietnam War and it covers the beginning of the U.S. Army's offensive operations from late 1966 to late 1967. The build-up had been essentially completed (though GEN Westmoreland wanted more troops) and COMUSMACV said this was to be the "year of the offensive." He intended that, finally, the thrust of the war would be reversed, that the combined forces would strike the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese, pin them down, and inflict such heavy losses that the war might end. He "assumed that the highly mobile American units could bring the ragtag enemy forces to battle and defeat them with superior firepower."

So much for high hopes! "At a 28 August [1966] commanders' meeting in Nha Trang, Westmoreland and his principal staff officers...duly noted statistical advances in the official "measurements of progress," which included an estimated enemy attrition rate of 7,000 per month, but had no evidence to indicate a decline in overall enemy strength or capabilities." There wasn't any.

Secretary of Defense McNamara had posited a philosophy that there are things which can be objectively measured and those that can be only subjectively assessed, and it falls on each of us to discern the difference and evaluate programs accordingly. With the arrival of U.S. troops in Vietnam, MACV began to demand various statistics to determine the success or failure of its programs. As the author points out: "The specific approach of Washington's leaders to the struggle in Vietnam emphasized statistical results..."

The text reflects this: almost every action description ends with a listing of the dead found on the ground and the weapons recovered. After numerous pages of this, you begin to wonder what this recitation is about. And, at the end of this book, MacGarrigle quotes McGeorge Bundy, the President's national security advisor, who warned that both the military and the administration had overemphasized statistics as an indicator of success in Vietnam.

This book is almost like a diary, a listing of daily and weekly events in each corps area, who ran into whom, how the action ended, who suffered which casualties, etc., etc. The book is broken down, logically, into actions in each corps area, and discusses briefly each major operation and some of the minor actions involved. (There are 57 major operations described.) There are some maps, but not enough for the historical tactician. But this

book is mostly about Westmoreland's strategy and how it was carried out.

There is an analysis at the end of each chapter, giving a broad view of the overall campaign, but almost no analysis of small unit actions — why a platoon leader or company commander succeeded or didn't. This may be the result of limited space, but the *ARMOR* reader will miss it. An exception is the description of the battle of Ong Thanh, a disastrous calamity for the 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry, whose men "fought well under extreme circumstances... taking more casualties in a single action than any other battalion under [General] Hay's command." Reading that part takes you right into the battle. All the way through the book, the reader gets an increasing feeling that things were not going well, despite fine planning and courageous soldiers. The American politicians and senior officers simply failed to understand the determination of the North Vietnamese and their willingness to absorb terrible losses to realize their goals, "Hanoi was willing to pay whatever price to see the war through, a resolve that Washington did not share."

The author is quite candid in his judgment of the South Vietnamese government; of the refugee problem in Quang Ngai, he writes: "Saigon's overburdened, inefficient, and often corrupt administration lacked the ability, and at times the will, to improve the refugees' condition." And, in Long Huu, the "government forces were unable to provide security, and their thefts of produce and poultry alienated the villagers. Government cadre carried out their programs indifferently..."

The book has numerous lessons learned, but you have to look for them. One of the more important is on page 230: "The brigade also lost 15 of 18 key officers, including [the brigade commander] and all three battalion commanders. This 'revolving door policy,' which guaranteed the rapid rotation of officers in combat commands, was later criticized as representing careerism at its worst. It destroyed any prospect for continuity of command, it hurt field morale among the enlisted ranks, and it ultimately lessened the effectiveness of U.S. forces." This is a lesson we need to review regularly because too often personal ambition clouds our judgment of what is best for the Army.

Secretary McNamara later wrote to the President: "Nothing can be expected to break [the communists'] will other than the conviction that they cannot succeed." While the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong suffered terrible casualties in 1966-67, they never lost their belief that, over the long haul, the Americans would give up and they would win. Statistics notwithstanding, they were right!

Personal note: I was surprised at the high number of individuals named in the book that I know and have served with in some capacity. Reading about your friends and places where you worked in a "history text" does little to make you feel young!

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The Canadian Kangaroos in World War II by Kenneth R. Ramsden, Ramsden-Cavan Publishing, 1701 Stewart Drive, RR3, Cavan, Ontario L0A 1C0 Canada. ISBN 0-96996-97. Softback, 200 pages. Available direct from the author, price \$16.95 plus \$3.00 postage etc. in Canada. Overseas, send an IRC for details.

Among the innovations the Second World War brought onto the battlefield was the use of armored personnel carriers to carry infantrymen into battle with the same levels of mobility and protection as tanks. Early half-tracks went some way toward allowing the foot soldier to advance under fire, but both German and American designs were not well armored, nor always as mobile as the tank they were to accompany. Britain's carrier series were mobile enough, but still not well protected and far too small to carry more than a handful of men. The true breakthrough came in August 1944 during the Falaise breakthrough when redundant Priest self-propelled guns, withdrawn when Canadian regiments who used them during the D-Day landings converted to towed 25pdr guns, were hastily modified and used with great success.

To man these vehicles, a new unit was formed from a variety of sources, which finally became known as the 1st Canadian Armoured Carrier Regiment. The unit and its vehicles were initially classified "Secret," so much so that when they were assigned a Regimental padre, it took him a week to find his unit. The troops did get regular mail, however, and their success in reducing infantry casualties was such that they were expanded and a British tank regiment was re-equipped along the same lines.

The regiment fought, literally in the vanguard, in many major and minor actions as the 21st Army Group advanced across France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany. It scored many notable firsts, and became the only Canadian unit in the British 79th Armoured Division. With the war in Europe won, it was disbanded and as such passed into history. Its deeds are mentioned in passing where they affected the course of events, but apart from a small regimental history produced for its members, its full story has not been laid down until former member Kenneth Ramsden produced this account. It covers the regiment and its actions from beginning to end, drawing on the unit's original war diary and recollections of those who were there to give a long overdue and detailed account of this unique unit.

Development of tactics, organization and equipment is interwoven with the battle accounts and details of the regiment's progress. The initial rush to produce the first converted Priests, and the changeover to Ram Kangaroos, which gave the unit its cap-badge and this book its name, will be of great interest to anyone interested in these unusual machines. While not technical in style, close reading will give a lot of pointers as to how the vehicles looked. Some photos of the Ram Kangaroos

are among the illustrations, although none of the Priests, and there are several of the other 79th Armoured Division vehicles which, though good in themselves, are not strictly relevant to the story.

That small drawback apart, the account here makes for fascinating reading, with several unusual things brought to light. We now know why there was a sudden demand for uniforms in small sizes, and what lengths the unit's signals and maintenance sections went to provide radios and keep the vehicles running, including an unusual use for an 88mm gun trailer. Progress can be followed with clear maps, and those members of the regiment who died or were wounded are listed. A bonus is the inclusion of the text of the original history booklet, and its list of those units carried by the regiment into action.

Like a number of units raised during the war and disbanded soon afterwards, the story of the 1st Armoured Carrier Regiment should have been told a long time ago. Outside the small circle of AFV enthusiasts and modelers, they are all but unknown. That situation has at last been resolved; we can now know their story, and they themselves will be able to know that their efforts are not forgotten.

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The Desert Fox in Normandy: Rommel's Defense of Fortress Europe by Samuel W. Mitcham, Jr., Greenwood Publishing Group, Westport, Conn., 1997, 256 pp. \$26.95 (hardcover).

The Desert Fox in Normandy gets off to a slow start. The book begins with the usual acknowledgements of Rommel's genius in North Africa (was he really brilliant, or was Montgomery responsible for "The Desert Fox" legend?). Mitcham also slips in a few unnecessary comments on the state of liberal education in America and an attack on another author's critical writings about Rommel.

Despite the slow start, *The Desert Fox in Normandy* picks up steam and provides some insights into how and why the Germans lost at Normandy. The book is at its best when discussing the German plans, operations, and reactions to Allied maneuvers.

Several excellent quotes support the author's contention that among the Nazis, Rommel understood the Western Allies best (especially his appreciation of close air support). He was clearly the most capable German available to defeat the Allied invasion.

Both sides lost opportunities at victory, particularly early on. Rommel's famous absence on June 6th combined with Hitler's decision to withhold the reserves, ensured defeat. By the 10th of June, with local counterattacks thwarted and Allied air wreaking havoc on German movement, all real hope of forming a sizeable counterattack force and pushing the Allies back into the sea was lost. From then on, the Germans began their brave yet ultimately futile attempt to contain the enemy in the Cotentin Peninsula.

The last half of *The Desert Fox in Normandy* contains descriptions of the increasingly desperate measures Rommel and his subordinates took to stave off defeat. The book gives an appreciation of the tenacity of the German soldier, and made me believe that the time it took the Allies to finally break out of hedgerow country had more to do with the competence of the average German infantryman than with Rommel's genius.

More translations of Rommel's orders and dispatches, if they exist, would have been especially insightful. In addition, more detailed maps would have helped to explain many of the operations.

Mitcham's use of "mini-biographies" on several of the lesser German players involved in the battle proved helpful. He also presented a good (but somewhat irrelevant) account of Rommel's involvement in the plot to kill Hitler.

The Desert Fox in Normandy would serve as a suitable companion to Stephen Ambrose's *Citizen Soldiers* or other books detailing the Allied version of the Battle of Normandy. The book does a good job of presenting the battle from the German operational view. It showed how desperately the Germans — Rommel in particular — tried to defeat, then to contain, the Allies in Normandy.

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The Tanks at Flers by Trevor Pidgeon, Cobham, Surrey, United Kingdom: Fairmile Books, 1995. 247 pages (Volume 1) with accompanying map collection (Volume 2), \$69.00.

All histories have their start somewhere, and for all tankers, our history began on 15 September 1916 with the first combat use of the tank at the battle of Flers-Courcelette. When the 36 British tanks of the nascent Heavy Section, Machine Gun Corps attacked the German trenches on 15 September, the nature of ground warfare forever changed. While the tanks' performance on that day was uneven and dubious, those first hesitant steps foreshadowed the possibilities of mechanized combat. In *The Tanks at Flers*, Trevor Pidgeon has succeeded in creating a well-written, extremely detailed, and commendably researched narrative of the battle. Pidgeon's work is the most complete and comprehensive account of the tank's battlefield debut yet published.

The great strength of *The Tanks at Flers* is in the detail in which Pidgeon dissects the tanks' actions during the day. In most cases, Pidgeon was able to sort and analyze a host of often conflicting spot reports, official histories, and personal narratives of the battle to determine the actions and accomplishments of almost all of the individual tanks involved in the assault. This "worm's-eye" view of the fighting not only provides the reader with an increased appreciation for the "face of battle" in the First World War, but also, for our techno-centric Army, a compelling historical example of the uses and limitations of new weapons systems. One of the more interest-

ing aspects of the book is Pidgeon's analysis of how the Germans and the British scrutinized the battle in an attempt to "make sense" of the threat posed by, or possible uses of, the new war machine.

The Tanks at Flers is superbly illustrated with photographs and drawings from the period. Volume II of the book contains twelve reproductions of the British trench maps used at the time of the battle with annotations by the author to assist the reader in following the flow of the fighting. Each chapter in Volume I also contains an extremely useful "Field Guide" that allows today's visitor to the battlefield to link the historical narrative to the present lay of the land. Units wishing to conduct a staff ride of the battlefield would find the map set and "Field Guide" invaluable to understanding the actions of the day.

The Tanks at Flers is a unique account of a long ignored aspect of the First World War and the development of armored warfare. The book provides the scholar and military professional an insight into the difficulties of the wartime production and fielding of a new weapons system, a better understanding of combat in the First World War, and an appreciation for the tanker-pioneers from which all modern armor soldiers have descended. It should be remembered that while mechanical difficulties and technological limitations prevented the tank from becoming a critical weapon in the First World War, their use on the Western Front at Flers and other battlefields provided fertile ground for the imaginations of military thinkers and armor enthusiasts like J.F.C. Fuller and George Patton.

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Eisenhower: The Pre-War Diaries and Selected Papers, 1905-1941 by Dwight D. Eisenhower, edited by Daniel D. Holt and James W. Leyerzapf, Introduction by John S. D. Eisenhower, published by The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998, \$45.00 hardcover. 612 pages, 18 illustrations.

As a military historian, I have had several opportunities to conduct research using primary documents such as official battle records, maps, archival materials, and diaries and personal papers. Any researcher would do well to approach the latter category — given these documents' personal association and importance to the historical figure — with a certain sense of skepticism based on the inevitable bias that must, in one form or another, appear. I myself have often wondered what it is that makes a person take the time to record thoughts on a regular basis in a diary. Is it a sense of destiny that he or she feels at an early age? Or is it perhaps that the act of physically capturing seemingly mundane daily thoughts serves as a means of self-examination or reflection? For whatever reason, personal diaries and papers can prove valuable to the historian and student of human

behavior alike, if the reader places the document in its proper context. Students of Dwight D. Eisenhower will welcome the recent publication of his pre-war diaries and selected papers as an opportunity to develop a clearer understanding of what this soldier thought before he became the historical giant we regard him as today.

This collection, edited by the director of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, Kansas, begins with an introduction by John Eisenhower that serves to place the book in its proper historical context. The six chapters that follow (the first chapter consists of diary entries from 1905 to 1926, with the remaining five chapters covering the period 1928 through December 1941) provide a remarkable perspective on Eisenhower's development as a young soldier serving in the pre-World War II Army. These entries take the reader on a journey from Eisenhower's graduation from West Point, through his service in the early tank corps, to his service as a member of MacArthur's staff in the Philippines. To quote the book's cover jacket, "[these] five diaries, personal and family letters, official military correspondence, speeches, published writings, and reports... offer the most compelling evidence yet of the impressive range of Eisenhower's experiences between the wars."

This collection of studies, reports, personal letters and diary entries serves to balance the "official" Eisenhower with the less-widely known, reflective family man. Space limits me to two examples. Early on in the book there appears a rather detailed discussion of the capabilities of the tank, written as an article for the November 1920 issue of *Infantry Journal*. Don't be misled by the date — young officers of all branches would do well to read it today, for in principle Eisenhower's comments are still valid. Yet this example is countered in the book by a personal letter, poignant in its brevity and sincerity, written by Eisenhower just two months after the *Infantry Journal* article. The letter extends the Eisenhower family's thanks to the commanding officer of the unit to which Eisenhower was then assigned for the soldiers' sympathies and flowers on the occasion of the death of young Doud Dwight, their 3-year-old first born son. What impresses me most about this collection is the opportunity it provides for the reader to see, through Eisenhower's own writings, both sides of a man we generally regard as larger than life. Here is revealed the human side of a soldier as he worked to develop his decision-making skills and served in duty assignments that brought him into contact with America's rapidly developing military-industrial complex.

We as professionals are fortunate that Eisenhower made the personal effort to record his thoughts in his diaries. The editors of this latest edition to the Eisenhower historiography provide us with materials we can use to develop our own assessment of this important figure. I recommend strongly the addition of this work to the collection of any officer or military historian who seeks a more intimate understanding of the man the world knows as "Ike."

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The Deadly Brotherhood: The American Combat Soldier in World War II by John C. McManus, Presidio Press, Novato, Calif., 1998, 353 pages, \$28.95, hardcover.

For those of us tired of works about tactics, strategy, and major personalities of World War II, this book provides a breath of fresh air. The author truly "gets down in the weeds," describing World War II combat at a very personal level. There is little mention of leadership above battalion level. In fact, the index does not list Generals Eisenhower, Montgomery, or MacArthur. Only one mention is given to General Patton. *The Deadly Brotherhood* focuses on the men who faced combat day in and day out. We hear only infantrymen, tankers, combat engineers, and Marine riflemen tell their stories in their own words through exhaustive use of interviews, diaries, and manuscripts. From food, equipment, and weapons to environmental conditions and becoming a casualty; the author provides all the nitty gritty detail that often is lacking in other works. We hear the soldiers' words describing their own feelings towards the enemy and their reasons for getting out of their foxhole day after day to make another advance. We learn not about tactics and techniques but about constant, grinding combat and its effects on individuals. It is the first book I have read that deals entirely with the frontline soldier and his combat experience.

The Deadly Brotherhood is meticulously researched and written. Forty pages of notes and a seven-page bibliography attest to Mr. McManus' professionalism and experience as a writer and scholar. This is not a dry scholarly work, however. I found the book very readable and fast paced. With two parts divided into twelve chapters, the work is well organized and follows an orderly progression that experienced and casual military history readers alike will easily follow. Thirty-two black and white photographs reinforce the text well. There is not a single portrait of a field grade or general officer. I think that both the military professional and casual reader will enjoy this book because of its strict focus on the combat soldier's experience. I strongly recommend that warriors of any variety read this book. It is an excellent reminder for those of us who have not experienced combat that, in war, soldiers suffer extraordinary pain, deprivation, fatigue, and stress, as well as the constant threat of death and wounds.

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The Bear Went Over the Mountain, Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan, Lester W. Grau, editor, Frank Cass Publishers, London, 1998. 220 pages, \$52.50 (hardcover).

The Soviet war in Afghanistan has not yet received the attention it deserves from military professionals, especially here in the United States. As the Cold War recedes from mem-

ory and we face the prospect of peacekeeping, nation-building, and peace-enforcement around the world, the hard lessons of this nasty war may prove useful to American soldiers who find themselves in places like Haiti, Somalia, and Bosnia.

Lester W. Grau's *The Bear Went Over the Mountain, Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan* is an attempt to present those lessons from the point of view of both the Soviets and the editor. Since the end of the Cold War, western scholars have had increased access to Soviet archives of all types, including military historical and operational studies. This book derives from such a study conducted by the Frunze Military Academy. The faculty there attempted to capture lessons learned at the small unit tactical level from the officers who participated in these actions. This book is an edited translation of that study, similar to the historical and "lessons learned" studies produced for our army during and immediately after a conflict.

The book's chapters are organized by topics, with several historical vignettes presented within each topical area. Topics covered include blocking and destroying guerrilla forces, the offensive in populated areas and mountains, and march and convoy escort. Comments by the Frunze Academy faculty and by the editor, a retired American Infantry and Soviet Foreign Area officer, place the actions in context and suggest some of the lessons to be taken away from these stories. Since the book describes unit actions generally at the battalion level and below, junior officers and NCOs should find these stories professionally educational. Armor leaders will be interested in the Soviets' use of armor and mechanized forces in difficult terrain against the light, irregular Mujahideen. Finally, these "snap-shots of combat" illustrate that the Soviet (and presumably Russian) military was more adaptive and less doctrinaire than commonly believed.

Unfortunately, since the book originated as a sort of after-action report, it frequently reads as such and is mostly devoid of personal insight and feeling. The book's clinical style makes it an unlikely candidate for simple pleasure reading. The maps, while plentiful, use Russian graphics and are sometimes oddly oriented, instead of following the common practice of orienting north toward the top of the page.

Nonetheless, this book offers valuable professional insight into the Russian military's tactics and operational art, and their ability and willingness to innovate. Intelligence and operations officers might find the vignettes an excellent source as they design wargame and training scenarios in preparing units for deployment. Since it is likely that we will continue to find ourselves as peacekeepers/enforcers around the world, studying the Soviets' military experience in Afghanistan may provide useful lessons.

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West Front by Talonsoft. Requires IBM PC 133mhz Pentium, Windows 95/98, 16MB RAM, SVGA graphics, 4x CD-ROM drive, mouse. \$54.95.

Reviewed on: IBM 133mhz Pentium with Windows 95, 48 MB RAM, 4x CD-ROM drive.

The sequel to Talonsoft's *East Front*, and heir to Talonsoft's renowned *Battleground* series of computer games, *West Front* did little to live up to the hype that has surrounded it and its predecessors. *WF* is a turn-based tactical level simulation of WWII ground combat. Icons represent platoons, individual vehicles, and crew-served weapons. The scale is 250m per hex, 6 minutes of real-time per turn.

First impressions do go a long way, but there must be substance to back them up. Upon first opening *WF*, I was impressed by the 256-page manual (I hate on-line manuals; if you pay enough for a game, it should have a hardcopy manual, but I digress). After loading it, I was equally impressed with the excellent quality of the terrain map and units, which are modeled on actual micro-armor models. Both 2D and 3D views allow you to view the battlefield from many perspectives. All of these are strengths found in both the *Battleground* and *Campaign* series of games from Talonsoft. Martial background music and background battlefield sounds complete the ambience.

The game comes with a tutorial and several "basic training" scenarios, which quickly introduce you to the mechanics of the game and its interface. Both the interface and the mechanics are exactly what the designers intended them: a precise way to control the aspects of fire and movement for every unit you have on the battlefield. This is not a problem with the smaller scenarios, but it is as you progress to the larger ones, where you must personally control the movement and firing of up to a hundred or more units.

There are options to move units by organization, but the AI tends to move units along paths that you would not take, often exposing them to fire from spotted enemy units. So you must individually move each unit. There is also a flaw in the relationship between fire and movement, in favor of movement. In a turn that represents six minutes of real time, the average unit can fire twice if it doesn't move, but a typical tank can cover 2500m over open ground, which often allows you or the enemy to unrealistically maneuver.

While there are flaws in the game mechanics, the biggest problem I have with *WF* is that it simply takes too long to play. This is not due to the computer or the AI, but due to the necessity of issuing so many orders while individually moving each unit. If you do buy and play this game, I would recommend playing the tank battle scenarios which do not become as bogged down as the infantry battles. Another problem is that the game mechanics reward tactics that take advantage of the system, not real WWII tactics. You find yourself fighting the game rather than a real WWII opponent.

WF contains a campaign game and a very good scenario editor, all of which are miti-

gated by the poor playability. Overall, I would not recommend *WF* to the average reader of this magazine. Those with a specific interest in the period or setting, or those who like the *Battleground* and/or *Campaign* series of games, may like this game, but I did not. I also did not like the *Battleground* series or *EF*, so this may be a matter of personal preference.

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Tank Platoon Operating System (TPOS) by David Rennaker and Marc Sanborn. Published by BowTech Inc., Vine Grove, Ky., 1998. \$65.00.

FM 25-101, Battle Focused Training states that "Leaders are responsible for identifying and training essential soldier tasks that support the unit's mission essential collective tasks... [leaders] must fully understand the unit's collective tasks and how soldier tasks are planned, trained, and evaluated." Exactly how does a tank platoon leader learn to read a company METL and decide what collective tasks are in support? Currently, the Armor Officer Basic Course POI includes an eight-hour block of instruction entitled "Train the Force" that does, in a limited way, discuss the highlights of *FMs 25-100* and *25-101*. Unfortunately, a detailed understanding of the ARTEP manual and its included crew collective and individual tasks is not included. Eighteen months of senior instructor experience has shown me that a newly assigned lieutenant, thrown into the Training Management cycle, has no clear response to his commander's question: "What does your platoon need to train on?" — whether that training be an STX or Sergeant's Time.

Enter *TPOS* — the single Leader Book production program available utilizing an *MS Access* Jet Database Engine. Talk to one of the authors, a successful tank platoon sergeant, and he will tell you that *TPOS* was designed as a research tool for the tank platoon leader; synthesizing both *FM* and *ARTEP* and taking the mystery out of producing training objectives for subordinate leaders. My platoon leader experience, much like many others, was that a stubby pencil and unlined paper combined with hours of reading, note-taking, and cross-referencing could produce a decent Leader Book. Yet, all along, I wondered if there was a better way to cross reference the Company METL with the *ARTEP* Manual while at the same time tracking the platoon's training status.

The Out-of-the-Box Experience (OOBE) for this product is solid. Whether downloaded from the website or installed via 3.5" disks (I did both), this product downloads and installs in about half an hour. Questions can be answered via either tech support or the embedded interactive help menu.

When you enter the *TPOS* user-friendly menu screen, you can select from the following topics: Training Reports, Soldier Information, Gunnery Data, Serial Numbers, and Additional Reports (allowing the user to search for a specific piece of information).

Select "Training Reports," and you have instant access to a powerful crosswalk of tasks directly from *ARTEP 17-237-10-MTP* Chapter 2 and Appendix C. Here is how this is useful to the leader: Early in the fiscal quarter, the commander gives a platoon leader specific platoon collective tasks to focus on for the next three months. Push the "Platoon Collective Task Crosswalk" push-button, and the leader knows exactly what crew collective tasks apply to the commander's guidance. Next, by selecting the "Crew Collective Tasks Crosswalk," the leader is shown which specific individual tasks require proficiency. As a bonus, the user can select from buttons labeled for the Battlefield Operating Systems — by selecting "Command and Control," the *TPOS* illustrates every collective task that pertains.

As a superb data management tool, *TPOS* enables the leader to quickly identify weaknesses and plan and conduct training to improve proficiency.

"Gunnery Data" allows the leader to manage all important tank data used during maintenance and gunnery while "Serial Numbers" provides for the entry and management of all serial numbered items in a tank platoon.

Equally as useful as "Training Reports," is "Soldier Information." Entry fields cover everything from age to astrological sign and everything in between. When a soldier arrives, the leader prints the data screen and has the soldier fill in the blanks. The leader then enters the data into *TPOS*. Then, using a page of "Additional Reports," the leader can generate a query of any collection of the information with a single keystroke. A practical example of this feature and its utility comes from a notional lieutenant in Camp Casey equipped with *TPOS*. In preparation for the inevitable artillery strike that always precedes a Warsteed Exercise, the company commander wants a by-name list of every soldier's clothing sizes — from their T-shirts to their OGBs (before COB). This information will be sent to the S-4 to conduct resupply operations. The lieutenant with *TPOS* accesses the database and produces the report in three clicks of the mouse; the lieutenant without *TPOS* spends his day with pencil and paper chasing down 15 soldiers.

Currently, *TPOS* is used in the 2nd Squadron, 16th Cavalry Regiment to manage both soldier and student personal data and in the Armor Officer Basic Course to develop Maneuver Lesson Plans. In the near future, both a Scout Platoon and a Company Commander operating system will be available.

System requirements: 486 Microprocessor, Windows 95 or NT, 15 MB of available HD, VGA, and CD-ROM (3.5" is available).

Using the BowTech, Inc. Website, a *TPOS* demo is available for review prior to purchase at www.militarytools.com or you can contact BowTech, Inc. at 614 Central Ave., Vine Grove, KY 40175.

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