

# BOOKS

**The Longest Day** by Cornelius Ryan, Touchstone Books, 338 pages, \$11.00.

It is most fitting that the Touchstone Books Division of Simon and Schuster reissued the late Cornelius Ryan's classic account of D-Day, *The Longest Day*, to mark the 50th anniversary of the Normandy invasion. First published in 1959, *The Longest Day* was reissued on 6 June 1994.

For those unfamiliar with the book, *The Longest Day* tells the story of D-Day through the eyes of the participants on both sides. Since it was written relatively soon after the end of the war, most of the actors were alive, with the events of the day still fresh in their memories. Using his considerable skills as a war correspondent and news reporter, Ryan assembled an impressive number of first person interviews and, crafting them with extensive research in documents, operations logs, and diaries, produced a highly readable and dramatic account of one of the turning point battles of World War II.

In his forward, Ryan stated that his book was not a "military history," but rather "the story of people." And perhaps those looking for an in-depth, operational analysis of the entire Normandy campaign will be disappointed. History, however, is intended to be the story of real people, and *The Longest Day* succeeds admirably in that. Other more recent books may relate in exhaustive detail the operational or strategic story, but Ryan set for himself a different task: to provide the reader an appreciation for the confusion and terror, the courage, humor, pathos, and irony of that day's battle on and behind the beaches, through the telling of personal accounts. Ryan's mastery of this genre ensures the timelessness of *The Longest Day* and makes it a must read for anyone who wants to feel vicariously what combat is like, and experience 50 years later a crucial event in modern history.

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**A History of Warfare** by John Keegan, Random House, Inc., New York, 1994. 392 pages, \$14.00.

John Keegan's latest book, *A History of Warfare*, opens with the somewhat bold statement that Clausewitz was wrong; war is not an extension of politics. Those familiar with the author's previous works, such as *The Face of Battle* and *The Mask of Command*, will probably not find it surprising that he rejects what many have treated as gospel. They will also not find it surprising that he argues his point convincingly.

John Keegan argues that while nations use war as a political tool, this does not necessarily mean war is political in nature. War has its own nature, a terrible nature that often leads not to political gain, but to ruin. Clausewitz confused a use of war with war's true character.

To show the "error" of Clausewitz' way of thinking, the author demonstrates what happens when war is used for political means but gets out of control; it destroys the masters who sought to use it. The point he is driving at is that war's nature is to serve war; when left to its own devices, war will grow out of control. He cites as an example the Easter Islanders, who were one of the first cultures to invent total war. They began warring for political purposes — their rules for selecting their 'king for a year' required men to fight to find the egg of a sooty tern, a bird that lived on the island. This fighting eventually grew out of control; the warrior or ruling class became known as *tangata rima toto*, "the men with the bloodied hands." These men succeeded in destroying their own culture and nearly exterminating their own people. The island suffered a complete societal breakdown and became an armed camp. The population was decimated with "primitive" weapons and starvation. Far from achieving any perceptible political benefit, war brought the opposite of political order: chaos.

Keegan then embarks on a detailed tour of warrior cultures and styles of warmaking through history. He starts with "primitive" warfare. This is the frequently stylized form of fighting practiced by primitive peoples such as the Aztecs, Maoris, and modern Yanomano (a tribal people who live along the Brazilian-Venezuelan border). It is often highly ritualized and regulated, and may involve sham fights and displays of mockery or ferocity. Such warfare may turn quite violent in extreme conditions, but generally showed much restraint. There is discussion of other styles of fighting which added various levels of "sophistication" to the primitive formula. The nomadic chariot and horse peoples, the Greeks with their phalanx, and the Arabs with rapid, standing (mercenary) armies, all added new facets to the concept of warfare.

The author pays much attention to those military cultures that were initially very successful, but failed to adapt to changing conditions, and were crushed or simply disappeared into the societies they conquered. Examples are the Mongols, Mamlukes, and Zulus.

Significantly, these last two, like all other cultures that encountered it, fell to the "Western" style of warfare. The three basic tenets of Western warmaking were not new, but in combination proved unstoppable. These tenets were the combination of ideology, the acceptance of any new technology, and the willingness, when necessary, to fight face-to-face, to the death. The

Western style spread European (and American) imperialism across the planet, sweeping all before it. The problem for those who used the Western style of fighting (us, for example) was that sometimes both sides in a conflict used it. In these cases, especially when the adversaries were evenly matched, the results were devastating for all concerned. This was demonstrated repeatedly from the American Civil War through the present conflict in the Balkans.

Having shown this destructive trend in warfare, John Keegan offers the warning that "Politics must continue, war cannot." By saying this, the author argues not for an end to armies; instead he cites professional, standing armies as the only feasible means to contain and limit war. They (we) must be used to protect civilization, to prevent its destruction. This does not necessarily entail a drastic change in our way of doing business. We must still train and fight to defend our Nation's interests against any and all enemies. Perhaps the change needs to be in the process of defining what is truly in our Nation's best interest. Significantly, the author cites Operation DESERT STORM as the best (he goes to the extreme of calling it the only) example of a truly just war. To him, DESERT STORM, should be the pattern for the future use of armies... the restoration of order and resistance of aggression.

*A History of Warfare* holds a twofold warning for the U.S. military in general and the Armor Force in particular.

First of all, due to the drawdown and decreasing procurement budgets, we face the danger of becoming a hollow force. We must guard against this eventuality. We also must avoid complacency — we cannot become too confident in the technology that won our battles of yesterday. We must accept that someday the tank (as we know it) may be as obsolete as the Zulu assegai or the steppe pony. We owe it to our country to recognize that day and adapt to the changing face of warfare.

Secondly, and more importantly, as nations and as members of the international community, the United States and its allies must learn from the intellectual restraint and, to some extent, from the symbolic ritual of alternate military cultures. These ideas are alien to us today, but they limited violence in the past. If we follow Keegan's advice, we need not reject our military culture, but we may need to expand our horizons. In a multi-polar, nuclear-armed world system, the potential for catastrophe is too great to be closed-minded about ways to limit violence and maintain order and democracy.

Weapons technology has come a long way since the ironwood clubs with which the Easter Islanders destroyed themselves. The modern proliferation of every type of weapon from automatic rifles through nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles has given the

human race of the late 20th Century an unmatched capacity to eradicate itself. Perhaps the most important lesson a reader can take away from *A History of Warfare* is the necessity of learning from the past to find ways to limit violence in the future. It is often said that the most ardent pacifists are those who fight the wars, and as professional soldiers, we must lead the fight against aggressive, total warfare. For civilization's sake, we cannot afford to allow the fate of our species to be decided by "the men with the bloodied hands."

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**The Pacific War Atlas, 1941-1945**  
by David Smurthwaite, Facts On File, 1995. 141 pages, \$15.95.

The 50th anniversary of VJ-Day has increased the public's awareness of the complex and arduous Pacific campaign. Along with numerous unit reunions and commemorations are a large number of new books that analyze and describe the Allied campaigns in the Pacific and Far East. David Smurthwaite's *The Pacific War Atlas* is a good effort that reviews the war in the Pacific and Far East. The author, an assistant director of the National Army Museum in London, has previously written on operations in the Far East. His knowledge of the Pacific campaign is apparent in the book's comprehensive review of the operations in the Pacific. Smurthwaite succinctly describes the successes and failures on both sides and, where appropriate, he provides solid criticism or praise for each side's conduct of the battle.

The book contains over 50 photographs and 60 maps aiding in the illustration of Smurthwaite's well-written text. Unfortunately, the value of the photographs is diminished by their small size. Numerous maps in the book suffer from inaccuracies, most notably in their representation of naval forces. For example, the map illustrating the attack on Pearl Harbor has cruisers represented as destroyers and battleships. Also, many of the maps illustrating invasions and ground combat lack the basic details of unit name and size. Overall, the below-average quality and accuracy of the maps hinders the reader's understanding of the text.

David Smurthwaite's book provides a fine overview of the operations in the Pacific, but does not present any new material. *The Pacific War Atlas* is good for the casual reader who is interested in what happened 50 years ago and why it happened. Once the maps are edited for accuracy and clarity, this volume will provide a handy reference for the general reader.

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### WORTH A LOOK:

## A Useful Canadian Military Journal

Review of Canadian Army Newsletter, *Dispatches*, Vol. 1/1, November 1994.

The Canadian Liaison Officer at Fort Knox, Major R. Dill, came by the office and dropped off a copy of *Dispatches*. This is a newsletter that the Canadian Army publishes quarterly and disseminates to soldiers in the field. It is mainly a lessons-learned manual that discusses new tactics, techniques, and procedures that are currently being tried and tested in a theater of operation. This is a powerful way for the Canadian Army to disseminate new information and ideas that have saved them lives as well as materiel.

The information in this newsletter originates from PORs, lessons-learned publications, and post-operational interviews. It collects experiences and recommendations on ways their army can improve on individual and collective tasks. This issue concentrates on convoy escort and related operations in support of Operations Other Than War (OOTW). In particular, over the last three years, the Canadian Army has participated in United Nations (UN) operations in Africa, the Far East, and the Balkans. These operations centered around the delivery of humanitarian aid using convoys.

The newsletter begins by discussing the different size convoys used — the small convoy of 10 vehicles or less and the large convoy of 30 vehicles or more. However, no matter how big or small the convoy, it is the Canadian Army experience that each convoy needs to have an Advance Group, a Close Protective Group, and a Reserve Group.

**Advance Group.** This group is the leading element of the escort. It proves the safety of the route and attempts to warn of trouble before the arrival of the vehicle column. It might be required to reconnoiter detours and to establish pickets. Helicopter support greatly increases its effectiveness, particularly in detecting ambushes.

**The Close Protective Group.** This group provides the immediate close protection of the vehicle column. The escort commander is located within this group.

**Reserve Group.** This element provides the rear guard/reserve, medical, and recovery resources of the convoy.

The newsletter attributes convoy success or failure to the junior leaders: the lieutenants, warrant officers, sergeants, and master corporals. Each convoy was packaged to support that junior leader and his mission. The newsletter stresses not changing doctrine to support missions. Use of standard troop-leading procedures and planning procedures are essential. This ensures consideration of all mission areas, from the

threat to the logistical requirements. Also, a liaison needs to be developed between the force and local community agencies. This will provide the convoy commander with much-needed information about his route. The liaison provides valuable information on the local protocols and, in most cases, early warning of trouble brewing in the area of operation.

The most interesting of the new methods and concepts was the "tunnel concept," which originated as a British tactic for convoy protection above the platoon level. It was successfully employed several times along 'hot' routes in Bosnia. In essence, the concept employs the following organizations, usually working at the battle group level: the security element, the convoy(s), and the reserve. The security element or 'tunnel force' is the first group, often a mechanized company. This element moves first, with the mission of physically dominating the route from the convoy start point to the release point. Once the 'tunnel' is in place, the second force, a well defended convoy(s), commences. The tunnel force only engages indigenous forces if the convoy or themselves are engaged (critical chokepoints and checkpoints are actually under observation and, if necessary, engaged by direct fire). The tunnel reserve is the third element and is normally waiting in a hide or base camp outside the tunnel. C<sup>2</sup> is therefore a battle group responsibility. The newsletter includes an actual operation in which the tunnel concept was used.

The doctrine used by the Canadian Army to conduct convoy operations is basically the same as ours, the difference being that the Canadians have established a set method of TT&Ps for every operation. A convoy mission in Somalia mirrors one being conducted in Bosnia, in terms of organization. Of course, each operation requires a different package, but each convoy has the same three groups. Each convoy may be infantry-heavy or armor-heavy, but the execution still remains the same. The main difference for each operation is the Rules of Engagement (ROE). These need to be clearly defined for each separate theater and trained before the soldier enters the AO.

The newsletter continues to discuss different aspects of their convoy experience like combat service support, the training used to prepare for deployment, and the equipment needed that was not part of their original TO&E. This provided for interesting reading and provoked thought on our current unit structure.

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