

BOOKS

Of "Warrior-Studs" and "Perfumed Princes"

Hazardous Duty by David H. Hackworth (COL, USA, Ret.) with Tom Mathews. William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York. 328 pages. \$25.00.

This book claims, "America's most decorated living soldier exposes the real truth about the U.S. military." I will not dispute Colonel Hackworth's personal valor, nor the number of his decorations. But the "truth" he presents is heavily flavored by his own "unique" perspective.

This book is a rambling collection of war stories, heavily flavored with profanity (because that's how soldiers talk), interspersed with barbs against "The System," the Military-Industrial-Congressional Complex, and anyone who generally does not fit into his idea of a soldier. COL Hackworth has visited every operation and fight in the last decade, from the Gulf War to Bosnia. He has talked with the leaders and the troopers involved. He lavishes praise on his idea of "real warrior-studs" and heaps disdain on "Perfumed Princes," soldiers who do not measure up to his idea of selfless service.

But this book does perform a service to the Army and the Defense Department. He did make me think, although I had to choke back my disdain for his operating procedures and his repeated "concern" for the troops — concern repeated so often as to make you wonder about its sincerity.

The really unfortunate thing about this book is that when COL Hackworth does make a worthwhile observation, for example the problem of mines in Bosnia, he leads his worthwhile point with, to use his vernacular, profane horseshit which effectively disguises his point. One thing I've learned in the 20 years I've served is to make a point with selective profanity, but once you've proven you're a hard-core warrior, let the profanity go. The book is saturated with the words and phrases we use in the motor pool and the TOC. So what, Colonel, make your point based on experience, which I do not doubt you have.

COL Hackworth also makes "new" suggestions for the restructuring of the Defense Department, which are by and large revarnished trite ideas from the extreme liberal wing of the Democratic Party. The author's new ideas are: do away with the U.S. Air Force and combine the Army and Marine Corps. These sad, old ideas obscure some very salient ones he gathered in his interactions with our troopers, like putting money into R&D for new body armor, lightweight comms gear, and streamlining of the acquisition procedure.

COL Hackworth also points out that our civilian leadership's dearth of military experience, in either political party, requires military planners and leaders to more fully explain the depth of the commitment to military operations other than war, in addition to the real gun fights of the future. We all understand his examples, like the fact that a battalion on MFO duty really ties up one brigade of troopers in the preparation, execution, and recovery/retraining cycle. I am a planner right now, and believe me, I spend sleepless nights thinking about the battalions we have in Bosnia, Kuwait, and the Sinai, and how we'll get those troopers out when we have to fight. Good point, Colonel; we owe it to our civilian leaders to make them understand the application of military power.

So, should you buy this book? My answer is a qualified yes. The point of reading is to expand your range of thought, and this book does make you think. It is really unfortunate that COL Hackworth obscures his points with "barracks talk" and rambles on about meeting with former Vietnamese enemies, then shifts back to his travelogue of trouble. His "truth" is not so clear to me; it sounds at times like a rehash of Gabriel and Savage's *Crisis in Command*, from the late 1970s, and I know we are not that bad off, yet. I really think COL Hackworth needs to write a book on how to fight the dirty little wars he believes we will be facing in the future — and by the way, I believe he is correct here. This would be a real contribution to the Army, more important than chasing generals and looking for faults where there might not be any.

Just so COL Hackworth does not think I am one of those who has sold his soul to become a "Perfumed Prince," I'll note here that I probably won't command a battalion and, therefore, will not be promoted any higher. But Colonel, I still call them like I see them.

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A Quick and Dirty Guide to War, Third Edition by James F. Dunnigan and Austin Bay, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1996. 690 pages. \$27.50, hardback.

This is not a book to be read from cover to cover, rather one to have close at hand while watching the evening news or reading the daily paper. It covers the world in major geopolitical pieces going into just

enough detail to provide the reader the background (geography, history, local politics) and agenda of all the key players. It certainly does not disappoint readers interested in numbers and predictions. Each chapter provides charts with empirical data the authors have developed from wargaming. The authors use this data as a major component of their predicted outcomes; the first edition was 80 percent accurate and the second edition 72 percent correct.

The book would be better served with the addition of more maps in greater detail. The index provides quick access to more information on today's third page story before it becomes *Newsweek's* cover story. The only major deficiency is the lack of any documentation to explain where the authors got their information. The unstructured bibliography provides a few clues, but coupled with the lack of documentation, it is impossible for the reader to find out more information on some of the more interesting lines like "...some Brazilians fear that the United Nations intends to 'internationalize' control of the Amazon..." Which Brazilians? The authors cheat readers out of the opportunity to evaluate the quality of the research material and, more importantly, the ability to further their understanding of a situation by picking up the trail of knowledge where the authors left off.

The book meets its stated goal to provide readers a brief synopsis of the world's wars and possible situations that could easily become wars, and explains what we should expect from them in the future. Armor and cavalry officers should consider this book for their professional libraries. With luck, there will be a fourth edition around the turn of the century with an accompanying CD ROM diskette filled with the magazine and newspaper articles the authors used in their research, not to mention more maps and pictures.

CPT MATTHEW MORTON
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Arrogant Armies: Great Military Disasters and the Generals Behind Them by James M. Perry, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York, 1996. 314 pages. \$27.95.

James Perry's *Arrogant Armies* is a journalist's survey of military catastrophe. His subjects are General Braddock, famous for the Braddock Massacre; Charles V.F. Townshend, who surrendered a British Army in

Iraq during World War I; and other foolish, vain, and arrogant officers who led armies to catastrophe in the last two hundred years. Perry's style is pithy and reveals some predisposition to regard soldiers as arrogant and empty headed. Perry makes no pretensions about his qualifications or his motives. A political writer, he is expert in his field, but argues that understanding the history of these kinds of events is critical and important not only for journalists, but to be well informed. He expresses the hope that this book might encourage young people that history is worthwhile and exciting. In this attempt, he is successful.

Perry recounts the unfortunate results of 11 failed military campaigns clearly and concisely, and tells the story in such a way as to develop a sense of foreboding, even if the reader is familiar with the campaign. Perry also lays out the policymakers' role in these outrageous affairs. Sending troops to salvage failed policy has a long tradition. Because most of these campaigns involved operations overseas, logistics failures also contributed to the disastrous events Perry describes.

Flawed policies and operations at the end of enormously long supply lines contributed to failure in campaigns from 18th century North America to Morocco in the early 20th century; but Perry's central thesis is that "arrogance, contempt for the enemy, bad intelligence...and incompetent political leadership," were the chief causes of military catastrophe from Braddock to Mogadishu. Mogadishu! — Yes, Mogadishu. Perry uses the events in Mogadishu to remind us that the elements of military catastrophe remain with us today. His conclusion is irritating, because it is compelling and chilling, and because it could happen again. Arrogance, contempt for the enemy, bad intelligence, and flawed policy are not the province of history alone. All of us who would lead troops should read Perry and consider the implications of his argument.

COL GREGORY FONTENOT
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Inside the Blue Berets: A Combat History of Soviet and Russian Airborne Forces, 1930-1995 by Steven J. Zaloga, Presidio Press, Novato, Calif., 1995. 339 pages. \$24.95.

Steven Zaloga is the author of numerous books on the Soviet and Russian military. Additionally, he writes regularly for *Jane's Soviet Intelligence Review* and has written and produced several video documentaries

on military technology. His look at the Soviet, and now Russian, airborne demonstrates his expertise and provides tremendous insight for the military scholar.

The value of this book is stated clearly in the book's introduction: "The Russian Army may no longer be 'The Threat,' but the Blue Berets [Russian Airborne soldiers] are likely to figure prominently in the headlines over the next decade. The Blue Berets are Russia's power projection muscle in these [current] conflicts. This book aims to establish Russia's legitimate claim as one of the pioneers of airmobile forces and to explain how the tradition is changing the face of today's Russian Army."

In the early 1930s, the Soviets led the world in the development of paratroopers and airborne tactics. Zaloga goes to great detail in recounting the early Soviet experimentation in this futuristic style of war. Most of these tests and trials, to include their use during World War II, were disastrous, but the author's descriptions reveal numerous lessons. They add detail to an area little studied or written about.

Zaloga explains how the Soviets developed their airborne forces as a strategic asset, working directly for the Soviet General Staff. This fact, and the fact that all airborne forces were mechanized in the 1950s and 1960s, demonstrates differences between the Soviet paratrooper and his U.S. Army counterpart.

The author's description of the development of the Soviet airborne force as a rapid deployment or shock force is outstanding, and it allows the reader to understand why the Soviets maintained such a large airborne force, and why they mechanized it. An entire chapter discusses airborne armor tactics and armor systems. The Soviets, from the inception of the airborne concept in the 1930s, planned to use armor forces as part of the airborne operation. Usually, these forces were airlanded following the seizure of an airfield. This leads to a discussion of the development of an airborne armored vehicle and airlift to move these and other armor assets.

The author also includes brief discussions about the other Soviet special operations units: Spetnaz, Soviet Naval Infantry, and Naval Spetnaz. This, and the discussions of the use of airborne and special forces during the war in Afghanistan and the Moscow coup attempts in the early 1990s, bring the reader up to the present day and also bring this work into focus. Zaloga's entire development shows that the new Russian airborne units are the ones with which U.S. Army forces will most likely interact as either friend or foe. The work also takes on current significance as the author traces the careers of several prominent individuals through their time in the airborne corps, to

include General Alexander Lebed (Russian "National Security Advisor") and General Pavel Grachev (ex-Russian Defense Minister).

This book is well written, providing for easy and enjoyable reading. An extensive bibliography is included. The information presented has importance, not simply to scholars, but to Armor/Cavalry soldiers as well. The men and units discussed are "players" on the world military stage. Additionally, the Russian airborne's use of armor in rapid deployments poses interesting questions in light of the recent decision to cancel acquisition of an Armored Gun System. I recommend this book to anyone interested in the Russian (Soviet) Military and Airborne/Special Operations.

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Sheridan: A History of the American Light Tank, Vol. 2 by R.P. Hunnicutt, Presidio Press, Novato, Calif., 340 pages. \$80.

Dick Hunnicutt's series of books on American armor are well known to armor professionals as authoritative, heavily illustrated, and of extremely high quality. Together, they offer the definitive coverage of the development of U.S fighting vehicles.

What makes them so special is the level of detail. The author not only covers the major tanks that have been in the Army's inventory, but also the many test projects and prototypes that led up to the final design, along with the variants that followed. The text is accompanied by many outstanding pictures that make it easier to follow. Many of these pictures have never been published before, a tribute to Hunnicutt's incredible effort in contacting sources and gathering truly unusual photos.

His latest title is a bit misleading. Actually, the book is not so much a history of the Sheridan's development, but of all light armor projects in the post-WWII era, including the M41, experimental T71 and T92 designs, the Sheridan, and the Armored Gun System, may it rest in peace. This volume picks up where his earlier, *Stuart: A History of the American Light Tank, Vol. 1*, left off.

Despite the price in an era of overpriced books, this one is a bargain. Paper and printing are of the highest quality, and the binding is definitely reference-book class. These qualities set off a really first-rate effort.

JON CLEMENS
ARMOR Staff