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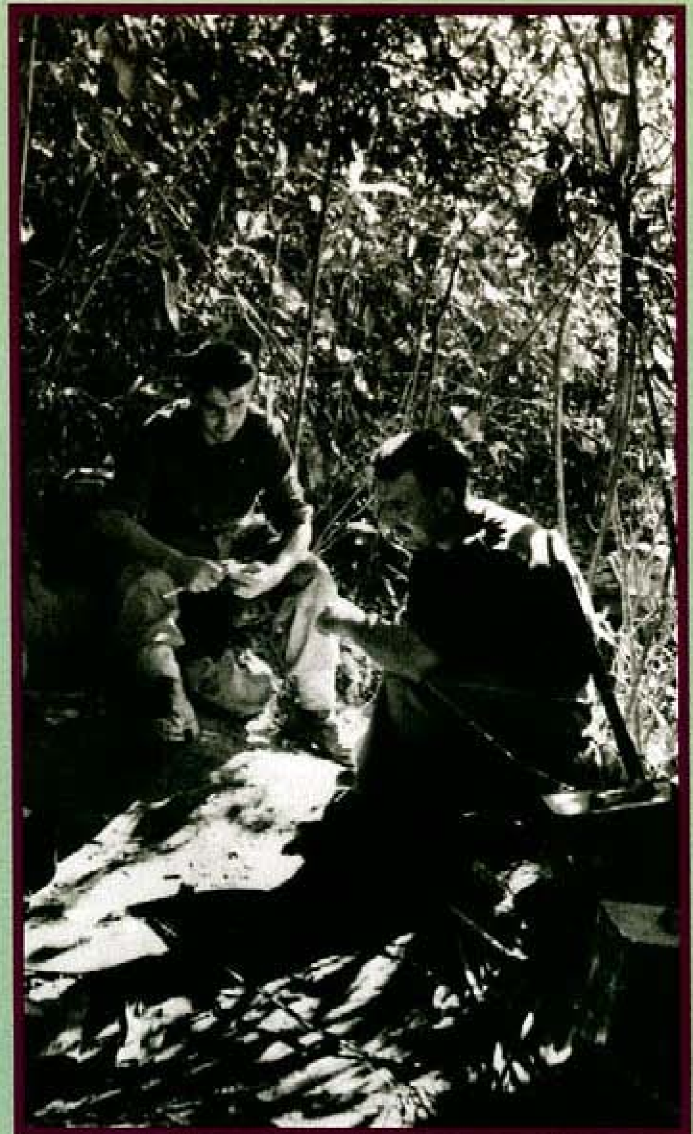

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NEWS NOTES

Center's Home Dedicated as Collins Hall

On 11 December 2002, Brig. Gen. John S. Brown, the chief of military history, dedicated Building 35 at Fort McNair, D.C., which has served as the Army Center of Military History's permanent home since September 1998, as Collins Hall in honor of the late Brig. Gen. James Lawton Collins, Jr. (November 1917–May 2002), who served as chief of military history from 1970 to 1982. General Collins's widow, Yolande de Mauduit Collins, and other members of General Collins's family were honored guests at the ceremony.

Army Breaks Ground for Heritage and Education Center

Secretary of the Army Thomas White and Senator Arlen Spector presided at a groundbreaking ceremony on 18 November 2002 that formally initiated the construction of a new U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. The center will provide new quarters for the U.S. Army Military History Institute and will house the new Army Heritage Museum, along with support and educational and administrative facilities. The Army Heritage Museum is designed to complement the National Museum of the United States Army planned for Fort Belvoir, Virginia. The state of Pennsylvania provided $10 million for the center, and Cumberland County donated the fifty-six acres on which it will be located.

JFQ Publishes Essay by General Brown

"Defending the Homeland: An Historical Perspective," an article by Brig. Gen. John S. Brown, the chief of military history, appeared in the Summer 2002 issue of *Joint Force Quarterly*. The article may be found on pages 10–16 of that issue or on the web at *http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq_pubs/0531.pdf*.

Upcoming Military History Conferences

The Department of History at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland, will sponsor a conference on African Americans in the Korean War. It will be held at the university on 16–19 April 2003 and will feature panel sessions, related exhibits at the university's new James E. Lewis Art Museum, and ceremonies honoring Korean War veterans. Further information and points of contact are available on the web at *http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/reference/Korea/morganstate/conf.htm*.

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The Chief's Corner

John S. Brown

The Center of Military History rolled through the first quarter of FY03 with ample activity in all our major areas of endeavor. With respect to official histories, the chief historian, Dr. Jeffrey Clarke, led a review panel that favorably evaluated Dr. Andrew Birtle's draft of the second and concluding volume of his study of counterinsurgency and low-intensity-conflict doctrine, and Dr. Birtle is well under way making the revisions the panel recommended. Dr. Graham Cosmas, now with the Joint History Office, is also making good progress with the revisions required for volume one of another two-volume work on the history of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. Meanwhile, Dr. Birtle and Dr. David Hogan, respectively, completed the updates and revisions needed to prepare two previously published works, *The Sergeants Major of the Army* and *The Story of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps*, for reissuance and forwarded the revised texts to Production Services (PS). Work progressed, as well, with the reworking of the Center's comprehensive text, *American Military History*, the most recent edition of which appeared in 1989. Finally, Dr. Richard Stewart, the chief of the Histories Division, wrote and worked with PS to complete the publication of a pamphlet entitled *The United States Army in Somalia, 1992–1994*. This pamphlet was distributed on the tenth anniversary of the start of Operation Restore Hope, the relief operation in Somalia.

The Histories Division also continued to provide support to the Army leadership by producing short papers on Army casualty reporting during the Vietnam War, the history of U.S. military justice and the handling of enemy prisoners of war, modern contingency operations, the size and success of U.S. occupation forces, the "deprocessing" and "decompressing" of U.S. soldiers after combat, civil affairs operations during an occupation, and a variety of other topics in support of planning for Operation Enduring Freedom. These studies were well received by key planners and decision makers on the Army Staff and in the Secretariat.

The Oral History Activity of the Histories Division supported the transition task force as General Kevin P. Byrnes assumed command of the Army Training and Doctrine Command. The activity also completed the interviews for Operation Noble Eagle—the U.S. Army response to the 9/11 attacks. Its next major job will be working with the Office of the Chief of Staff of the Army to identify and interview as many key personnel as possible with knowledge of the actions accomplished by General Eric K. Shinseki during his tenure in that office. These interviews will be well under way before General Shinseki's retirement this summer.

With respect to the Field Programs and Historical Services Division, Dr. Robert K. Wright, Jr., a historian who worked at the Center and in the Army field history program for twenty-eight years, most recently as chief of the Center's Historical Resources Branch, retired on 1 October. As many of you know, Bob was our resident expert on the colonial period, the author of *The Continental Army* in the Army Lineage series, and coauthor of *Soldier-Statesmen of the Constitution*. He also served as a historian in uniform, for a number of years as commander of the 116th Military History Detachment of the Virginia Army National Guard, and he provided historical coverage of Army operations in Panama, Kuwait, and Somalia. He plans to enjoy his well-earned retirement on the sunny beaches of Florida. Another member of the Historical Resources Branch, John McGrath, left the Center in December to join the staff of the Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth. He will still be working within the Army historical program, of course.

The Force Structure and Unit History Branch continued to address issues relating to Army transformation. The 2d Armored Cavalry is currently reorganizing as one of the next Stryker brigades. Unlike the earlier Stryker brigades, the 2d will retain a regimental organization but incorporate new structures within its squadrons. Consequently, it must undergo a more extensive internal transformation that will

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Courtesy, Library of Congress

British soldiers prepare a meal in the Arakan.

Read together, the two accounts provide a complementary picture of what Tolstoy, in one of his war stories, refers to as the "manoeuvres devised by great generals" and "the reality of war, the actual killing."

Stanley L. Falk

Burma Memoirs and the Reality of War

By Stanley L. Falk

In a recent study of soldiers' recollections of their experience of war, Samuel Hynes explained that the "reality" of this personal testimony provides a deeper understanding of "what war is like, and how it *feels*" than can be found solely in "history and its numbers."[1]

Defeat into Victory and *Quartered Safe Out Here*, the memoirs by William Slim and George MacDonald Fraser, attest to the accuracy of this assertion.[2] They describe their authors' participation in the bitter World War II struggle for Burma, offering insights into the events they experienced and the people they encountered. They are a form of subjective history, but unlike most history, written in the third person, they provide a first-person link with the past. With a little imagination, we can see ourselves in the authors' places and enter vicariously into their lives. This shared experience ensures us a closer and more vivid relationship with what took place in Burma half a century ago than any third-person history or report could ever afford.

We're also enlightened by the different perspectives of the two authors: Slim, the army commander, concerned primarily with "the big picture"; Fraser, a rifleman in an infantry platoon, concerned primarily with staying alive. There was, furthermore, a considerable difference in their ages. Slim (1891–1970) was an even 50 when the war with Japan began; Fraser (1925–), a young man of 19 when he enlisted a few years later. Both, however, had time to reflect on their experience. Slim wrote his memoir in 1955, when he was nearly 65, and Fraser prepared his more than 35 years after that, when he was almost 70. In each case, the older man looked back at his younger self and reflected, judged, and perhaps finally understood his long-past experience. As Fraser notes, thoughts that he had been too excited, hurried, or preoccupied to consider at the time, occurred "naturally" to him half a century later.[3]

The contrasting perspectives that Slim and Fraser offer are apparent even in the titles they gave their memoirs. Slim's *Defeat into Victory*, characteristically direct and unassuming—and originally published without the explanatory subtitle of the new paperback edition—is simply a terse summary of the entire three and one-half year campaign. Fraser's *Quartered Safe Out Here* reflects a more literary bent. It focuses on a specific, fixed recollection out of the many he retained: what he describes as his "lasting impression . . . of thirst" while slogging across the hot, dry expanse of Burma's central plain, trying vainly not to empty his water bottle, while one of his fellow riflemen loudly recited the opening lines of Kipling's *Gunga Din*:

> You may talk o' gin and beer
> When you're quartered safe out here,
> An' you're sent to penny fights an' Aldershot it,
> But when it comes to slaughter
> You will do your work on water,
> An you'll lick the bloomin' boots of 'im that's got it.[4]

The war in Burma was a long, difficult, complex, and bitter struggle: intense, ferocious, and conducted under the most strenuous and debilitating conditions.[5] It was fought by men of a variety of races, colors, and creeds, all mixed together in a patternless military quilt. There were the opposing Japanese and British, to be sure, but there were also Indians and Burmese, who fought on both sides, while the British forces included men from England, Scotland, and Wales, submerged within a multiethnic majority of Indians, Nepalese Gurkhas, and black Africans. Also fighting in Burma, normally under separate command, were Chinese and Americans, along with British, American, Australian, and Canadian airmen. And all of these were grouped under an unwieldy and confusing system of high command, designed to placate conflicting national interests and aspirations.

Both sides in this strange, exhausting war were frustrated by Burma's demanding geography and climate. The

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This essay was originally presented as a talk to the Military Classics Seminar at Fort Myer, Virginia, on 16 October 2001.

country was a nightmare of wooded mountains, jungled lowlands, broad desert-like plains, and wide rivers fed by countless streams that were steep ditches when dry and rushing torrents in the rain. Roads were few, poor, and incapable of adequately supporting military supply and movement. Railroads were practically nonexistent. And the heavy late spring/early summer monsoon made any extensive military operations during its duration exceptionally challenging. A final burden for both sides was the widespread incidence of disease: malaria, typhus, skin infections, and the soldier's eternal scourge, dysentery.

Slim and Fraser came to Burma with very different levels of exposure to military life. Slim's career was that of a successful senior British colonial officer.[6] He had volunteered as a private in World War I and was soon commissioned, but he was wounded while serving in the Middle East. His lower-middle-class background ruled out a postwar career as an officer in the regular British Army, but the Indian Army was readily open to him. The Indian Army consisted largely of Indian and Gurkha soldiers with a leavening of British troops, all led by British officers. Slim did well in it, commanding Gurkhas on the dangerous northwest frontier and learning to speak both Urdu and Nepali, and by 1940 he was assigned to command an Indian infantry brigade in action in northeast Africa. However, he did poorly in that assignment, was wounded once again, and was then sent to recuperate in a staff job in India. But fortunate circumstances led to his obtaining a divisional command in the Middle East. There he distinguished himself sufficiently to be decorated and chosen for a more important and challenging assignment in Burma.

By this point early in 1942, the tide of Japanese conquest, having easily swept into eastern Burma, was threatening to engulf the entire region, driving weak, unprepared, and poorly led British forces before it. To Slim fell the task of leading a fighting retreat of those shattered units, delaying the enemy where possible, but somehow escaping into India with whatever forces

Courtesy, Library of Congress

General Slim

he could. He learned some valuable lessons during this inglorious retreat, which he conducted extremely well considering the circumstances. But the British defeat left the Japanese in full control of Burma and Slim with the major task of restoring the strength, morale, and combat capability of his dispirited troops.

This he did with determination and skill, retraining and greatly strengthening his forces and reestablishing their confidence and fighting élan. He also built necessary supply lines, stockpiled food and ammunition, and created a first-class health and medical system, including a much-needed program for air evacuation.

During the winter of 1942–43, the Japanese rudely defeated British efforts to retake the Arakan, Burma's westernmost coastal region along the Bay of Bengal. Slim was nominally in command of the attacking British force but was denied operational control. By the time he was finally allowed to take charge, it was too late, and Slim once more had to preside over a British withdrawal.

Nevertheless, in the fall of 1943 Slim became commander of the Fourteenth Army, responsible for the defense of eastern India and the recapture of Burma. A new offensive was planned with Stilwell's American-supported Chinese forces attacking from the north

Courtesy, Library of Congress

Commonwealth soldiers in Burma evacuate wounded comrade using local river craft.

and British-Indian units driving into central Burma and the Arakan.

But the Japanese had other ideas.[7] Aware of the Fourteenth Army's buildup and sensing Allied plans, they too mustered their forces and early in 1944 launched an ambitious offensive of their own to defeat the British. Its primary objective was the hilly Imphal-Kohima area of India's eastern Assam province. Victory there might lead to a further drive into India and an uprising of Indian nationalist forces against the British. The Japanese offensive began with a diversionary attack against Fourteenth Army forces moving into the Arakan. But Slim, having by now learned how to handle Japanese tactics, soundly defeated the enemy and refused to be distracted from his offensive.

So, informed by ULTRA[8] and other intelligence of Japanese intentions, Slim made his own plans to trap and destroy the enemy. But he miscalculated the timing of the Japanese assault and only with great difficulty managed to extricate Fourteenth Army units caught off balance in forward positions. He then successfully fought off Japanese efforts to take Imphal, but initially paid insufficient attention to the area around Kohima, which he was then hard pressed to defend. Only his clear air superiority and his resulting ability to airlift reinforcements and supplies gave him a critical advantage over the enemy.

Still the Japanese plan was an overly ambitious one, poorly executed and coordinated, logistically grossly inadequate, and run by commanders either too bold or overly cautious. Exhaustion, heavy casualties, and supply shortages thwarted Japanese ambitions and sent the attackers reeling back into central Burma, leaving behind arms, equipment, and great numbers of dead and dying.

Slim now held both the initiative and a significant advantage in men and materiel over his enemy. He had made fewer mistakes than the Japanese and had been better able to overcome them. In his memoir, Slim freely admits his errors and gives full credit to his subordinate, superior, and supporting commanders. He modestly does not mention that his victories gained him both a knighthood and widespread fame.

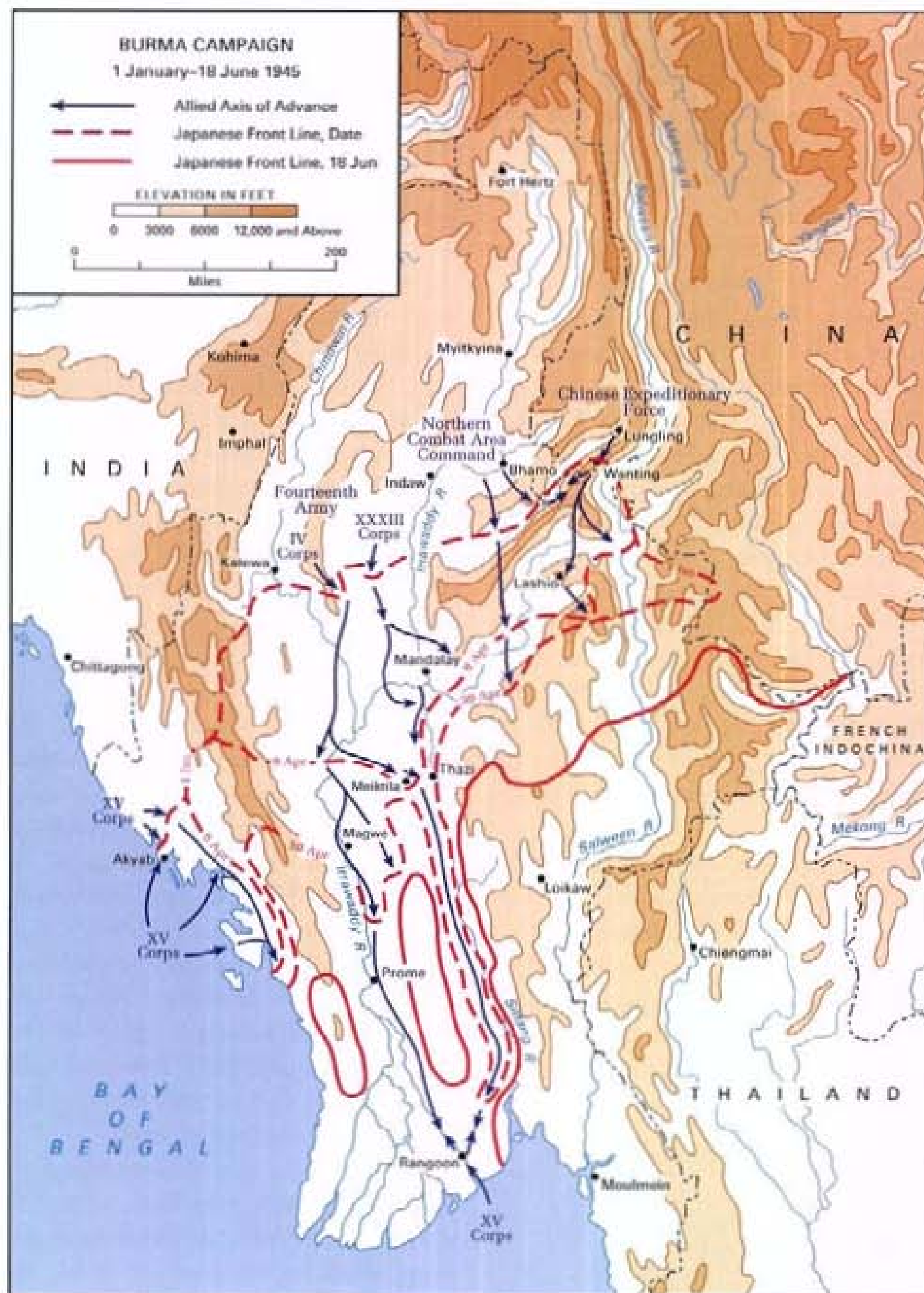
So as 1944 came to an end, Slim pursued the retreating Japanese into central Burma, hoping to trap them on the broad plain between the Chindwin and Irrawaddy Rivers. But the Japanese had no intention of being caught. They pulled back across the broad Irrawaddy and prepared to defend its eastern banks. Then, in a series of brilliant feints, deceptions, and other confusing maneuvers, Slim forced his way across the river at several points and threatened the Japanese base at Mandalay. Having thus drawn his enemy's attention, Slim secretly shifted some of his forces south to make an easy further crossing well downstream, aimed at the major Japanese supply base at Meiktila. Capturing Meiktila would cut off Japanese forces farther north, and once it fell into Slim's hands it would become what he called the "anvil" upon which the "hammer" of his northern forces would crush the remaining enemy.[9]

The plan worked brilliantly. By April 1945 the Japanese in Burma were doomed, and Slim, with overwhelming force, was pursuing them aggressively. His victories won him command of Allied Land Forces in Southeast Asia, a mandate he held until the war's end. He subsequently became commandant of the Imperial Defence College and then, as field marshal, chief of the Imperial General Staff. His final official post was that of governor-general of Australia. He died in 1970.

Now where was Fraser during all this? Well, having been born a third of a century after Slim, he didn't enter the army until he enlisted in 1944. By year's end, he was in the Indian Army as a replacement in Nine Section, B Company, 9th Battalion, Border Regiment, a unit from the then–English Lake District counties of Westmorland and Cumberland. A Scotsman, Fraser found himself in an 8- to 10-man section of Cumbrian hill men, whose rough accents and use of local dialects contrasted strongly with his own more British speech. The others tolerated Fraser genially, kidded him frequently, and even grudgingly admitted that he could brew a better pot of tea than anyone else. Older and more experienced than Fraser, they called him "Jock" or simply "lad," and kept him out of trouble.

Courtesy, Library of Congress

British artillerists prepare to shell Japanese positions just around the bend blocking the Imphal–Kohima road.



A battalion of Nepalese Gurkhas and another of Muslim Baluchi soldiers from India's westernmost region joined the 9th Border to form the 63d Brigade of the 17th Division. The division had been severely chewed up in the 1942 retreat, then rebuilt and revitalized but hit hard again at Imphal, prior to being readied once more for the Fourteenth Army's push into central Burma.

Supplied in great part by air, the 17th Division moved through central Burma, made the surprise lower crossing of the Irrawaddy to spearhead the capture of Meiktila, and then fought off strong Japanese attempts to retake the town. From Meiktila it leapfrogged with another division driving south toward Rangoon. Fraser and his section mates saw a fair amount of combat during this period, but he left them to go to officer candidate school. Duly commissioned after war's end as a lieutenant in the Gordon Highlanders, he finally returned to civilian life in 1947.

Fraser then began a long career as a newspaperman. In the mid-1960s, however, he began to write a series of amusing and sardonic novels about the fictional character "Flashman." Flashman had been a minor actor in the popular mid-nineteenth-century novel *Tom Brown's School Days*, a cad, bully, and generally disreputable young phony. Fraser brought Flashman back to life as an adult, a self-described scoundrel, liar, cheat, thief, womanizer, coward, and toady. In the eleven Flashman novels that have now appeared,[10] Flashman manages to take part in just about every major military event of the mid- to late-nineteenth century, including the Crimean War, Sepoy Mutiny, Khartoum, the Afghan wars, Custer's Last Stand, the Opium Wars, and even John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry. In each of these, Flashman behaves despicably but always manages somehow to emerge a hero, fooling everyone but himself. Fraser's depiction of Flashman—told in the first person in a pseudo-serious manner, with supporting footnote references to real historical personalities and events—is entertaining, irreverent, sanguinary, and high-spirited, indeed nothing short of brilliant. This thoroughly delightful style also characterizes much of the highly readable memoir that Fraser would eventually write—except that *Quartered Safe Out Here* is appropriately punctuated with sobering considerations of an infantryman's war.

Now, what led Slim and Fraser to write *Defeat into Victory* and *Quartered Safe Out Here*? Slim, for one, acknowledges the fact that any commanding general is probably unsuited to write a "complete and unbiased" history of the campaign he directed. But the general could, says Slim, probably offer "something of value." He might describe the problems he encountered, the reasons for his decisions, "what helped, what hindered, the luck he had, and the mistakes he made." Especially for those who might later be in his position, he might explain how he "attempted the art of command" and offer some indication of what it was like to bear the weight of wartime command responsibility.[11]

Fraser's motivations were of an entirely different and more complex nature. They stemmed initially from his encounter with official history, which he found to be "dehumanized," devoid of color, sound, and smell, and incapable of

projecting the perspective of someone who had actually taken part in the action being described. He cites as an example the brief statement in the British official history that during a raid the "[9th Border] Regiment suffered 141 casualties and lost one of its supporting tanks." Fraser's more vivid memory of that raid was of a tank that "burned for hours," attracting the attention of a large Japanese force, while he and some 200 other British, Gurkha, and Indian troops lay sweating in the night cold, with no time to dig in, "safety catches on" and grenades at the ready. They tried to remain undiscovered as whispered conversations continued and two men even got into an argument, until his platoon sergeant told everyone to "fookin' shut up." Meanwhile, a tank officer crawled around asking if everyone was okay, thus making people even more jittery. Finally, after what seemed an incredibly long night, the Japanese were discovered at dawn to have departed. But Fraser's small force was still cut off in enemy territory and had to make its way out as best it could.[12]

It was such passing, underwritten references in official history that, like Proust's taste of a small piece of a madeleine, led Fraser off into long searches into his memory and impelled him to write about Burma from what he calls "an ordinary foot-soldier's point of view." [13]

Fraser also explains that he wanted to create "some sort of memorial" to the "matchless men" with whom he served. Finally he wanted to show the difference in attitude "between 'then' and 'now'" and how today's political correctness—although he doesn't call it that—has led to an uninformed, unfair, and naïve understanding of how and why the war in Burma, indeed any war, was fought, and what the men who struggled through it felt and endured as part of its natural process. Fraser still retains those feelings. He refers unself-consciously to the enemy as "Jap," decries those who expect him to agonize or feel "guilty," and questions whether critics who weren't there are in any position to judge him.[14]

National Archives photo

Soldiers from the British 36th Division pass a Buddhist temple as they enter Tigyaing, Burma, February 1945.

Fraser and Slim share a common ability to provide insight and understanding beyond the simple descriptions of maneuvers and battles that form the heart of so many military memoirs. They suggest that there are significant issues and problems in war that the reader may not have considered previously or even imagined. Basic to this quality is the persuasive credibility of both accounts.

Slim's is based on a short narrative he wrote while in Burma, together with a "skeleton diary," a few documents, and his own memory.[15] He doesn't say whether or not he consulted the British official historians, but his account contains sufficient detail to suggest that he might have. The result is a very believable, straightforward, remarkably honest, "personal narrative," admittedly written from a field commander's somewhat limited view of events but presenting a full and knowledgeable account of the entire war in Burma. Slim describes success without boasting, admits doubts and mistakes without self-serving excuses, gives full credit to others, and rarely criticizes except by implication. He explains quite clearly the principles and methods by which he operated. His narrative is well written, factual but never dull, and enlivened by drama and occasional dry humor. From it emerges a picture of a commander who was confident, forceful, imaginative, disciplined, considerate of others, willing to take risks, and always concerned about the care and condition of his troops.

Fraser's *Quartered Safe Out Here* is entirely different. It is not a history of the Burma war, nor even of the half-year or so of Fraser's participation. It is, rather, the impressionistic recollections of a perceptive observer and skillful writer about his small role in the great culminating battles that sealed the fate of Japanese arms in Burma. It is based not on records or documents, although Fraser did consult the official history

From the collection of Roger D. Cunningham

The Burma Star Medal, awarded to Commonwealth soldiers who fought in Burma and India.

and check his manuscript with his former company commander. It draws simply on Fraser's memory, which he freely admits is imperfect.

But his memory was still sufficiently good nearly four decades after the events to allow him to write a vivid, realistic, and entirely convincing account of the dangers, fears, and humorous moments in the daily life of a combat soldier. The structure and content of his narrative are clearly shaped by Fraser's literary sense and skill—indeed, it reads in many ways like one of his Flashman novels: funny, entertaining, fast-paced, yet nonetheless serious and completely believable. Purists may carp at the fact that Fraser re-creates, verbatim, long stretches of dialogue that he openly admits are obviously not actual. But we can accept his assertion that these marvelously crafted conversations, with Fraser's careful phonetic rendering of the harsh Cumbrian accents of his sectionmates, are as he says "entirely faithful in gist, subject and style" and that this is the most credible way to portray the "tough, strong, forthright, and frequently aggressive" men with whom he served.[16] Fraser himself emerges as a young, novice soldier, initially somewhat confused and unwary, who matures into a wiser seasoned veteran in only a few short months, thanks to the rough guidance of his older comrades and his own growing awareness and instinct for self-preservation.

The accounts by Fraser and Slim thus complement each other beautifully, combining to give us a fuller yet contrasting picture of the Burma conflict. There are certainly many areas that the two memoirs address from different but correlate perspectives.

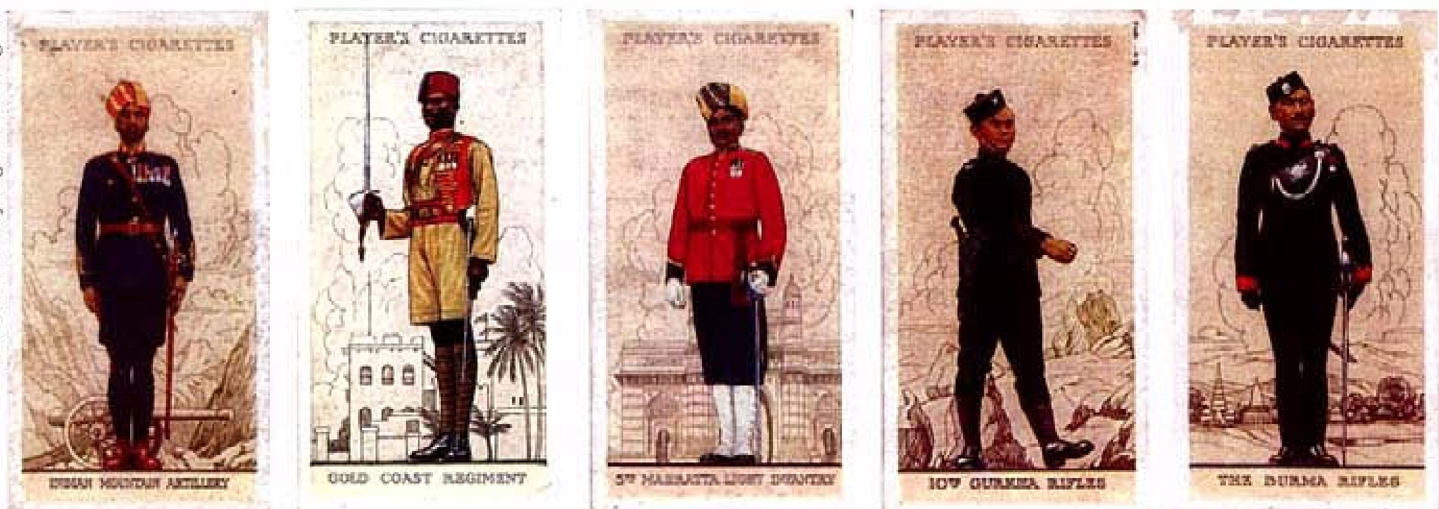
The subject of leadership is an obvious example. Slim clearly enjoyed exercising command, at whatever level he served, starting as a platoon leader: a first command and, as he points out, one that places you as close to your men as you could ever be. But a battalion, he says, was his first "real command," because "it is a unit with a life of its own," whose quality "depends on you alone." Then, commanding a division was "good fun," because "it is the smallest formation that is a complete orchestra of war and the largest in which every man can know you." Finally, he loved commanding an army, "because the creation of its spirit and its leadership in battle give you the greatest unity of emotional and intellectual experience that can befall a man." Quite a statement![17]

Fraser had a somewhat different view. His highest and in fact sole experience of command came when he was promoted to lance-corporal, second in command of his section, which he considered "the worst dogsbody's job in the Army," and he "didn't fancy it," especially since he was the youngest man in the unit. He found his initial experience leading the section to be "very educational," for he depended almost entirely on the wisdom and guidance of his veteran subordinates. Despite the "indifference" of the others, Fraser was dismayed by the responsibility he felt and "didn't welcome" it. He gained more confidence after his second mission in command, but he was still "glad it was over."[18] The contrast between Slim, the professional soldier, welcoming the challenge and responsibility, and Fraser, the young short-termer, filled with self-doubt, is instructive.

Slim's concept of leadership involved maintaining a close and trusting relationship with his subordinates, both the senior officers and the troops in the field. He dealt with his staff and senior commanders directly, rather than through a chief of staff, seeking their advice and explaining his decisions. He delivered instructions to his field commanders at their forward positions instead of requiring them to come back to his own. He was a frequent visitor to frontline troops, often making three or four visits a day and sometimes coming under fire. His solicitation for troop morale and welfare was obvious. His men trusted him, called him "Uncle Bill," and never doubted that he cared for them.

Slim's presence was certainly a big boost for morale when he showed up, typically unexpected, to talk to Fraser's battalion during the defense of Meiktila. He looked, according to Fraser, "like a rather scruffy private with general's tabs." He had a "robber-baron face"—Churchill said he had "a hell of a face"—

Shoulder patch of the British Fourteenth Army



From the collection of Roger D. Cunningham

Representative uniforms of the units of British Commonwealth soldiers who served in Burma

a "hard mouth and bulldog chin"—everybody uses that canine characterization—a "rakish" Gurkha hat, and a short carbine slung over his shoulder. When he "emerged from the trees," continues Fraser, "there was no nonsense of 'gather round' or jumping on boxes; he just stood with his thumb hooked in his carbine sling and talked about how we had caught Jap off-balance and were going to annihilate him in the open; there was no exhortation or ringing clichés, no jokes or self-conscious use of barrack-room slang—when he called the Japs 'bastards' it was casual and without heat. . . . You knew, when he talked of smashing Jap, that to him it meant not only arrows on a map but clearing bunkers and going in under shell-fire; that he had the head of a general with the heart of a private. . . . And afterwards, when it was over and he spoke of what his army had done, it was always 'you', not even 'we', and never 'I'."[19]

Slim's good relations with his senior staff and commanders extended as well to other commanders and echelons. Even in his memoir, when he questions the plans or decisions of others, he does not charge people with stupidity or malicious motives. He criticizes by showing the weakness of plans or actions and letting the reader reach his own conclusions. He is generous in his praise and only rarely indicates displeasure directly.

Two of the more difficult personalities with whom he had to deal were the American General Joseph Stilwell, commander of Chinese and American forces in north Burma, and the British Maj. Gen. Orde Wingate, who headed the long-range penetration group known as the Chindits. Despite Stilwell's acerbic personality and vitriolic tongue, Slim liked and trusted him and recognized his leadership abilities. The two didn't always agree on strategy, but they got on well—Slim was the only British commander under whom the distrustful Stilwell was willing to serve, and to do so even though he was senior to Slim.

Wingate was an entirely different case. His arrogance, emotional instability, and fanatical zeal for a type of operation that Slim considered wasteful gave the Fourteenth Army commander little reason to like him. And when Wingate proved obstinate, Slim simply threatened to relieve him or worse, and the Chindit leader backed down. Yet Slim appreciated Wingate's dynamism as a leader and regretted his untimely death in a plane crash.

Fraser, of course, had no such dealings with senior officers. He saw Slim only once, when he spoke to the troops at Meiktila. He liked what little he saw of his divisional commander, Maj. Gen. D. T. "Punch" Cowan. But it was with the men of Nine Section that he had the closest relationships, and with one exception he liked and respected them. His narrative is a penetrating description of how a small group of men lived and worked together and kept each other alive under the most dangerous and trying of circumstances. They formed a "bond," explains Fraser, that was not "quite one of friendship," but was based rather on their acting as a team to support each other unconditionally and on their realization of how essential that mutual support was to staying alive.[20]

Particularly revealing is Fraser's account of the calm, phlegmatic way the men of Nine Section reacted to the death of one of their comrades, Cpl. Tich Little: "They expressed no grief, or anger," writes Fraser, "or indeed any emotion at all; they betrayed no symptoms of shock or disturbance. . . . Not a word was said about Tich Little." But as a group they proceeded to divide up his military effects and equipment—not his personal belongings—each man substituting a piece of his own—a mess kit, rifle, tea mug, or other item—for one of their dead comrade's that was in better condition. "An outsider," continues Fraser, "might have thought, mistakenly, that the section was unmoved. . . . It was not callousness or indifference or lack or feeling . . . it was just that there was nothing more to be said . . . and what mattered now was the business in hand; those who lived would get on with it."[21]

Slim, of course, had no such intimate experience. Casualties were an unpleasant fact of war, to be limited as much as possible but unavoidable in any

operation. Nor did he have the same egalitarian relationship with others that Fraser had with his section mates. Slim liked and respected his staff and senior commanders, even as he laid out to them exactly what he wanted them to do and on what basis he expected them to operate. His directions were clear. First, he said, determine quite distinctly the object of any operation. Then follow these four basic principles:

"(i) The ultimate intention must be an offensive one.

"(ii) The main idea on which the plan [is] based must be simple.

"(iii) That idea must be held in view throughout and everything else must give way to it.

"(iv) The plan must have in it an element of surprise."[22]

Slim stressed integrity, discipline, the importance of morale, and the absolute necessity of thorough logistical preparation. He quickly learned the value of air support, especially of airlift. Other lessons he absorbed and passed on to all were that the jungle was "neither impenetrable nor unfriendly," that troops could learn how to use it to their advantage, and that offensive patrolling was the "master key to jungle fighting." Units were not surrounded just because Japanese were in their rear; it was the Japanese themselves who were surrounded. Air supply of isolated units enabled them to attack in all directions. Instead of trying to hold long continuous lines of defense, avenues of approach should be covered and enemy penetrations dealt with aggressively. Tanks could fight in almost any country except swamps and should be committed in maximum numbers: "The more you use, the fewer you lose." Japanese forces were "formidable" when holding the initiative, "confused and easy to kill" when we had it. Always "regain and keep the initiative." And so forth.[23]

Fraser, in turn, was not well versed in the principles of war. "It was something new" to him, he notes, this "attitude of regarding a defensive position not as a place where you waited to be attacked, but as a base from which you sallied out to observe or clobber the foe."[24] He also learned some more immediate combat lessons from his own experience. Unwisely attempting to check out by himself an apparently empty Japanese bunker, he was saved from being killed by a lone Japanese only by the sudden appearance of his section mates, who promptly dispatched the enemy soldier. After the excitement had subsided, platoon sergeant Hutton, a wise, older veteran, gave him the word in no uncertain terms. "Nivver – nivver," he ordered fiercely, "go in a boonker by yersel! . . . Git yer mucker [your mate] to cover you, or git me! Ye're not fookin' Gary Cooper!"[25]

Fraser also learned the importance of keeping his water bottle full and of not bunching up: "Keep yer bloody distance, Jock!" yelled Sergeant Hutton, whose constant refrain to the platoon during any sort of advance was "Keep ga'n! Keep spread oot!"[26]

Hutton was a canny one, but probably typical of his rank and position. Fraser's description of how the sergeant volunteered him for a dangerous assignment by twisting his words and alleged skills to prove that he was "joost the man" for the job is a priceless example of a traditional senior non-com at work on a young victim. You can read it for both laughs and edification.[27]

The men of Nine Section were not concerned with strategy, remained unaware of Slim's operational principles, and often had no idea or were skeptical of why they were undertaking certain actions. When Slim secretly moved the 17th Division, under every possible security restriction, so that it could make a surprise crossing of the Irrawaddy, Nine Section wondered why they couldn't light fires and had to stand constantly on alert when, as Fraser puts it, "there wasn't a Jap within miles." And just before Meiktila, when it was explained that the 17th Division was to be the "anvil" upon which Japanese forces would be crushed by the "hammer" of the advancing 5th Division, Nine Section had a different view. The 5th Division, one man asserted, "won't be the only fookin' 'ammer." The Japanese themselves, he was sure, would come crashing down on them, trying to kill them all.[28]

In fact, this is pretty much what happened. The Japanese made a major effort to retake Meiktila, and the 17th Division was cut off and had to be supplied and reinforced by air before the enemy attack was finally smashed. Nine Section was in the thick of it—this is where Corporal Little died—and Fraser describes vividly his moments of "rage, terror, elation, relief, and amazement" at what he experienced in the confused, close-quarter fight.[29] Slim, in turn, offers a fine overall view of the entire battle. Read together, the two accounts provide a complementary picture of what Tolstoy, in one of his war stories, refers to as the "manoeuvres devised by great generals" and "the reality of war, the actual killing."[30]

Yet while Slim and Fraser had different perspectives on many subjects, they were agreed on at least one thing: their deep animosity toward the Japanese. They respected the abilities of the Japanese as soldiers, their courage and ferocity in battle, their skill in jungle and night combat, but they were repelled by their brutality, their torture and slaughter of prisoners and innocent civilians, and their callous indifference to the customs and restraints expected of civilized soldiers. Both, also, were appalled and disgusted by the willingness of Japanese troops to die stupidly and uselessly rather than surrender or admit defeat, and at their killing of their own wounded to prevent their falling into enemy hands.

The Japanese, writes Slim, "were ruthless and bold as ants," the individual soldier "the most formidable fighting insect in history." "Jap," notes Fraser, "might be a subhuman creature who tortured and starved prisoners of war to death, raped women captives, and used civilians for bayonet practice, but there was no braver soldier in the whole history of war." Still, Slim implies and Fraser freely admits his "real hatred" of the Japanese, and Fraser reports his "joy" when he killed one in combat.[31] This was not racism or unreasoning prejudice, but simply the understandable re-

action of soldiers toward an enemy who committed atrocious acts.

Looking back on the war in Burma, both the Fourteenth Army commander and the Nine Section lance-corporal had reason to celebrate their participation—Slim because he clearly enjoyed the challenge, responsibility, and lessons he drew from the campaign; Fraser just for having had the experience: "Glad I was there; I wouldn't have missed it for anything."[32]

Yet in the final analysis, just how important was the bloody three and one-half year struggle for Burma? It was, in fact, simply a sideshow to the great war in the Pacific. It proved decisive for neither side and had almost no influence on the outcome of that great conflict—other than perhaps to draw off resources better used elsewhere.

For the British, the long campaign cost nearly 75,000 casualties, including 14,000 dead, but failed to regain much of their stolen empire, which they surrendered finally and irretrievably only a few years later. By recapturing Burma, they managed to recover some face lost in their earlier unsuccessful defense of the area. But it was readily obvious that the majority of their victorious forces were Indian and African troops rather than actual British Tommies, and that for most of the fighting they had enjoyed a preponderance of manpower, supplies, weapons, equipment, and air and intelligence assets.

For the Americans, the fighting in Burma reflected a naïve hope that recapturing an overland supply route to China might support a Chinese military effort strong enough to defeat or tie down major Japanese forces and provide bomber bases for attacks on Japan itself. But this hope was always illusory, and in any event the final securing of a land route to China came too late to affect anything a reluctant Chiang Kai-shek might have been willing to do.

For the Japanese, Burma was a graveyard of lost and foolish hopes. Having overrun and exceeded their original objectives there, they dreamed next of a march on Delhi to crush British forces and incite an uprising of Indian nationalists that would destroy forever British hegemony in South Asia—and perhaps just possibly lead to a link-up with the Germans in Persia. But this was a costly and forlorn chimera, for which they were neither willing nor able to commit the necessary resources—and which in any event would have severely crippled their defenses against the decisive American drive in the central Pacific.

As it was, nearly 200,000 Japanese soldiers perished needlessly in Burma. Like the warriors in Basho's classic *haiku*, all that remained of their dreams were the summer grasses that covered their graves.

Only the Indians and Burmese can be said to have gained from the war in Burma, in that it helped pave the way for their independence two years later. But this would almost certainly have come regardless of who had triumphed in Burma.

The Author

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NOTES

1. Samuel Hynes, *The Soldiers' Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War* (New York, 1997), p. xii, emphasis in original.

2. William Slim, *Defeat into Victory: Battling Japan in Burma and India, 1942–1945* (New York, 2000) [original London edition, 1956]; George MacDonald Fraser, *Quartered Safe Out Here: A Recollection of the War in Burma* (London, 1995) [original London edition, 1992]. Of the handful of published memoirs by Burma veterans, these two best combine to epitomize the war there. They form the primary basis of the discussion that follows.

3. Fraser, *Quartered Safe*, p. 222.

4. Ibid., pp. vii, 57. Aldershot, southwest of London, was the site of a large British military training camp.

5. The official British military history of the war in Burma is contained in S. Woodburn Kirby et al., *The War Against Japan*, 5 vols. (London, 1957–69), History of the Second World War, United Kingdom Military Series, vols. 2–5; Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems* (Washington, D.C., 1956) and *Time Runs Out in CBI* (Washington, D.C., 1959), U.S. Army in World War II, discuss U.S. Army operations in Burma; Louis Allen, *Burma: The Longest War 1941–45* (London, 1984), is very informative regarding Japanese plans and operations.

6. Ronald Lewin, *Slim, The Standard Bearer: A Biography of Field-Marshal the Viscount Slim* (London, 1976).

7. For the Japanese, see also Arthur Swinson, *Four Samurai: A Quartet of Japanese Army Commanders in the Second World War* (London, 1968).

8. Slim does not mention ULTRA in his memoir, but he was in fact a regular recipient of ULTRA intelligence. See F. W. Winterbotham, *The Ultra Secret* (New York, 1975), pp. 243–44.

9. Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, p. 394 et passim.

10. From *Flashman, from the Flashman Papers, 1839–1842* (London, 1969) to *Flashman and the Tiger* (London, 1999).

11. Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, p. xv.

12. Fraser, *Quartered Safe*, pp. xi, 58. The line from the official history is in Kirby, *The War Against Japan*, 4: 287.

13. Fraser, *Quartered Safe*, p. xiii.

14. Ibid., pp. xvi, 222.

15. Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, pp. xv.

16. Fraser, *Quartered Safe*, pp. xvi, xxi.

17. Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, p. 3

18. Fraser, *Quartered Safe*, pp. 91, 96, 166, 174.

19. Ibid., pp. xiv, 35–36. The Churchill quote is from Charles McMoran Wilson, Baron Moran, *Churchill: The Struggle for Survival, 1940–1965, Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran* (Boston, 1966), p. 428.

20. Fraser, *Quartered Safe*, p. 193.

21. Ibid., pp. 87–89.

22. Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, p. 209.

23. Ibid., pp. 142–43.

24. Fraser, *Quartered Safe*, p. 59.

25. Ibid., p. 10. Gary Cooper starred in the American movie "Lives of a Bengal Lancer," in which he played a heroic Scotsman in a British lancer regiment fighting Afghans in the Khyber Pass.

26. Ibid., pp. xii, 5, 77, 111, et passim.

27. Ibid., p. 29.

28. Ibid., pp. xii, 5.

29. Ibid., p. 86.

30. Quoted in Hynes, *The Soldiers' Tale*, p. xi. The quoted words can be found in Leo Tolstoy, "The Raid," (1852) in *Tales of Army Life*, trans. Louise and Aylmer Maude, The World's Classics (London, 1935), p. 3.

31. Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, pp. 381, 537; Fraser, *Quartered Safe*, pp. 86, 96, 155.

32. Fraser, *Quartered Safe*, p. 222.

National Archives photo

Officers of the 370th Infantry, 93d Division, who were awarded the French Croix de Guerre, February 1919

My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.

From "Dulce Et Decorum Est"
by Wilfred Owen[1]

Corporal Freddie Stowers
An Appointment with Eternity on Hill 188

By Taylor V. Beattie

Standing on the high ground west of and overlooking Bussy Farm, just south of the village of Ardeuil in the Champagne region of France, roughly halfway between Rheims and Verdun, it was not difficult to imagine the battle that raged below some eighty years before during the Great War. At the end of September 1918, the Germans were loath to give up marginally comfortable fighting positions within the farm to retreat across open fields to the north that offered little in the way of cover and concealment. The Americans, on the other hand, were anxious to occupy the hastily abandoned dugouts to recover whatever there was in the way of food, drink, and equipment left behind.

As I observed the scene, the wind cut straight through my windproof, polar-fleece jacket and poured down my neck, evoking a reflexive shiver. I imagine the winds originating from snow-capped peaks far to the south in the Alps, or perhaps from the North Sea. It is just plain raw here.

I had read in my venerable 1938-vintage guidebook, *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe*, that the monument to the 371st Infantry by which I stood "is inaccessible by automobile."[2] That is still true. I had left my rental car about a half a kilometer back and walked down a muddy track, scrambling under a barbed wire fence to stand here by the monument. The stone obelisk appears much as it does in the book, except there is a large chunk broken off the top. A sign laid at the base by the American Battlefield Monuments Commission tells me that the monument was damaged by shellfire in June of 1940, during World War II, or what I have come to know as the Great War, Chapter Two. The face of the monument states:

DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORY
OF MEMBERS OF THE
371ST R.I.U.S.
WHO FELL AT
COTE 188, BUSSY FERME
ARDEUIL, MONTFAUXELLES
AND TRIERS FERME
SEPTEMBER 28–OCTOBER 9
1918
ERECTED BY THEIR
SURVIVING COMRADES

Just below there is a list of eight officers killed in combat at the places and between the dates inscribed on the monument. The sides of the monument list the names of the 113 noncommissioned officers and private soldiers who also died in that fighting. On the lefthand side as you face the monument, nineteen spaces down, filled with chipping gold paint, is the name CORP FREDDIE STOWERS. This was the name I was looking for, the reason that I was here overlooking Bussy Farm on this blustery day.

I was first introduced to Corporal Stowers, or I should say the legacy of Freddie Stowers, in February 1994 when I was stationed with my family in Stuttgart,

Courtesy, George Bush Presidential Library

President Bush announcing the award of the Medal of Honor to Cpl. Freddie Stowers

Germany. At the behest of a good friend I decided to spend a long weekend with him exploring the battlefields of the American Expeditionary Forces (A.E.F.) in the Meuse-Argonne area of France.[3] Our last stop on that earlier trip was at the American Cemetery on the Meuse-Argonne battlefield at Romagne, France, about thirty kilometers east of Ardeuil. I had left the cemetery chapel and was meandering along a row of crosses among the 14,426 in that cemetery when the glint of unique gold lettering on one of them caught my eye. The name on the cross was that of Freddie Stowers, a corporal in the 371st Infantry, 93d Division, whose receipt of the Medal of Honor entitled him to the gold lettering. Taken with the notion that Corporal Stowers had been a Medal of Honor winner, I stooped down and snapped a picture.

By 1997, I had been reassigned to the United States, and one day I found myself on military business wandering the halls of the Pentagon, very much lost. As asking for directions is a sure sign of weakness in the military, I ambled along until eventually I found myself in the African American Hall of Heroes. Again my eyes were attracted by the glint of gold, this time from a Medal of Honor hanging in the middle of the display case. The medal belonged to Corporal Freddie Stowers, my acquaintance from the American Cemetery in France. I am terrible at remembering names, but I remembered that name and what's more, I now realized that Freddie Stowers was black, a thought that had not occurred to me. My chance contact with the grave of Freddie Stowers in France and now with his Medal of Honor hanging in an obscure hallway of the Pentagon was a revelation. I resolved at that moment to learn more about this man and his story.

In the segregated Army of 1918, two "colored" divisions in the lexicon of the day were raised for service in France. Freddie Stowers's unit, the 371st Infantry, was one of four regiments of the provisional 93d Division, which had been formed solely of infantry units. Soon after their arrival in France these four regiments, composed of African American enlisted personnel but largely led by white officers, had been assigned to the French Army. The regiments served with distinction with the French and earned many French honors. Freddie Stowers did not live to know that he would be awarded the Medal of Honor as he succumbed to his wounds far from home and things familiar on a lonely windswept hill in France on 28 September 1918.

Indeed the process that would ultimately lead to that award only began to unfold seventy years later in 1988 when Secretary of the Army John O. Marsh, Jr., initiated an investigation to determine whether there had been any racial barriers to African American soldiers in the award of the Medal of Honor. In early 1990 Army investigators discovered a Medal of Honor recommendation bearing the name of Corporal Stowers. Two officers were dispatched to France to track down the Stowers story. Extensive research revealed that four African American soldiers had been recommended for the Medal of Honor during World War I. Three of these award recommendations had been fully processed and had resulted in the award of the

Distinguished Service Cross. A total of 95 Distinguished Service Crosses were presented to black soldiers during World War I. For reasons unknown, Stowers's award recommendation had never been processed. So Secretary Marsh's successor, Michael Stone, directed that Corporal Stowers's Medal of Honor recommendation be moved forward through the review process. Following unanimous approval by the Senior Army Decorations Board, the recommendation was endorsed by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, and Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney, and forwarded to the president. On 24 April 1991, some seventy-three years after Stowers's death in combat, President George H. W. Bush in a White House ceremony presented Freddie Stowers's Medal of Honor to his surviving sisters, Georgina Palmer and Mary Bowens.[4]

Back at the 371st Monument above Bussy Farm, I consult my modern map of the area. Something is wrong: this is not Hill 188 as I had assumed. In fact, it is not really even a hill but rather more of a finger jutting out into the valley. Bussy Farm is where it should be, as is Bellevue Signal Ridge. I pull out a copy of an old operational map of the area and search intently, irritated now as a fresh blast of icy wind slaps the map back in my face and up over my head. Côte 188 is south of where I am standing now. My contemporary map of the Argonne purchased at the Tourist Information Center in Verdun shows the hill mass as Hill 194. In 1918 it was Côte 188. If I want to see the terrain as Corporal Stowers saw it, I need to get over to 188. Reluctant to leave the 371st obelisk, I linger for a few more minutes. On the face of the forgotten monument, well worn and unnoticed by me until now is an inscription: "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori." The regiment had adopted these words as its regimental motto, despite the fact that British soldier-poet Wilfred Owen had called the phrase the "old Lie."[5]

In early 1918 General John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces, had a problem. Since the arrival of the first U.S. troops in Europe, the British and French had been clamoring for individual and unit replacements to serve with their respective combat divisions. Guided by instructions from President Woodrow Wilson, Pershing aimed to keep the A.E.F. together, fighting as an American army, rather than having it distributed piecemeal to Allied forces. Pershing held firmly to this policy with only a few exceptions, the most notable of which were the four regiments of the provisional 93d Division, which required supporting elements that the U.S. War Department did not provide. Pershing offered these regiments to the French who, having a number of African colonial units already, readily accepted the offer. Three of the regiments of the 93d Division, including the 371st Infantry, were assigned to the Fourth French Army. In late September 1918 this army launched a drive north in Champagne adjacent and parallel to the U.S. First Army's attack between the Argonne Forest and the Meuse River. While the "black doughboys" retained their U.S. uniforms, they were issued French helmets, equipment, rations, and weapons, and they would rely on these the entire time they served with the French. The regiments were also reorganized in accord with French manning tables.[7]

> ***Our great American general simply put the black orphan in a basket, set it on the doorstep of the French, pulled the bell, and went away. I said this to a French colonel with an "English spoken here" sign on him, and he said, "Welcome leetle black babbie."***
>
> ***Maj. Arthur Little, 369th Infantry***[6]

Freddie Stowers, the grandson of a slave, was born in Sandy Springs, Anderson County, South Carolina, in January 1896.[8] His draft registration card lists him as a farm laborer, Negro, tall, slender, no disability, with dependent wife. His signature on the line marked "signature or mark" is stilted, produced with an unsteady hand.[9] I felt a twinge of familiarity glancing at his signature. The scrawled *Freddie Stowers* is much like the childlike signature of Alvin C. York, the crack shot from Tennessee. Like Freddie Stowers, Alvin York was a draftee with little formal education, hailing from modest origins.

Stowers was drafted and reported for duty on 4 October 1917. He was assigned to Company C, 371st Infantry, at Camp Jackson, South Carolina. He showed promise as a soldier and within two months was promoted to private, first class.[10] The regiment sailed for France in April 1918. Freddie Stowers was 22 years old and would not live to celebrate another birthday or to see his home or his family again.

It's quite a walk up Côte 188. I find a road, or rather a dirt track, leading northeast up the hill halfway between the villages of Gratreuil and Fontaine-en-Dormois south of Ardeuil. After reviewing unit histories and operational maps of the day, I believe that this is the approximate line of march that Freddie Stowers and his company took as they attacked the German positions here on 28 September 1918.[11] This could not have been easy for them, for although I'm walking unencumbered by military gear, I'm winded by the time I reach the summit. It is a long, gradual climb of at least two kilometers, and I'm walking into a steady wind. From the top of Hill 188 it is apparent that this

is the dominating position, or in military jargon the "key terrain," in the area. In other words, whoever possessed this piece of real estate had the ability to control the surrounding terrain through the use of his weapon systems. With good visibility the holder of Côte 188 could see into his opponent's lines for many miles. My operational maps show me where German trench lines once existed. Today the entire hill is freshly plowed with no sign of trenches or shell craters. There are, however, an inordinate number of shell fragments lying all about and more than a few unexploded artillery rounds. These 81-year-old duds were unearthed during a recent plowing and thrown off to the side of the track by an irritated farmer. Given the number of duds and the preponderance of shell fragments, I conclude that an awful lot of hot steel flew around here in September 1918.

Standing on Côte 188, I try to conjure the events of the battle in 1918. It is doubtful that 28 September 1918 opened particularly well for Cpl. Freddie Stowers and the men of Company C, 1st Battalion, 371st Infantry. They had been walking for three days with little or no opportunity for rest amid the din of artillery barrages. If Freddie Stowers was concerned that morning as he prepared to attack a hill defended by a determined and experienced German force, he set aside his fears and tended to the needs of the soldiers in his squad. Corporal Stowers was a noncommissioned officer, a leader, and as such placed his men first. I imagine him moving among them joking, whispering words of encouragement, checking equipment, and ensuring that every man was ready to do his duty on Côte 188.

Medal of Honor citation for Cpl. Freddie Stowers[12]

Corporal Freddie Stowers, 1872491, distinguished himself by exceptional heroism on 28 September 1918 while serving as a squad leader in Company C, 371st Infantry Regiment, 93d Division. His company was the lead company during an attack on Hill 188, Champagne Marne Sector, France, during World War I. A few minutes after the attack began, the enemy ceased firing and began climbing up onto the parapets of the trenches, holding up their arms as if wishing to surrender. The enemy's actions caused the American forces to cease fire and to come out into the open. As the company started forward and when within about 100 meters of the trench line, the enemy jumped back into their trenches and greeted Corporal Stowers' company with interlocking bands of machine gun fire and mortar fire causing well over fifty percent casualties. Faced with incredible enemy resistance, Corporal Stowers took charge, setting such a courageous example of personal bravery and leadership that he inspired his men to follow him in the attack. With extraordinary heroism and complete disregard of personal danger under devastating fire, he crawled forward leading his squad toward an enemy machine gun nest, which was causing heavy casualties to his company. After fierce fighting, the machine gun position was destroyed and the enemy soldiers were killed. Displaying great courage and intrepidity Corporal Stowers continued to press the attack against a determined enemy. While crawling forward and urging his men to continue the attack on a second trench line, he was gravely wounded by machine gun fire. Although Corporal Stowers was mortally wounded, he pressed forward, urging on the members of his squad, until he died. Inspired by the heroism and display of bravery of Corporal Stowers, his company continued the attack against incredible odds, contributing to the capture of Hill 188 and causing heavy enemy casualties. Corporal Stowers' conspicuous gallantry, extraordinary heroism, and supreme devotion to his men were well above and beyond the call of duty, follow the finest traditions of military service, and reflect the utmost credit on him and the United States Army.

I can sense each man conducting an internal rehearsal of his actions once ordered to attack. You were more likely to survive if you were good at selecting a covered and concealed route in the mayhem. With some luck and guile you could make it to the enemy trench line. If the enemy had not bugged out, that's where the real battle would start. You had one shot with your French-issued, M1886 Lebel bolt-action rifle. In a crowded trench you would not have time to work the bolt to cycle another round into your rifle, so you would use your bayonet on a determined enemy. I recall reading somewhere that bayonet wounds caused about 3 percent of the casualties during the Great War. That's 100 percent for those parrying, slashing, and thrusting in the narrow trench when eighteen inches of cold steel gets pushed through a face, neck, or chest. Each man would mentally rehearse the struggle because each wanted to be on the right side of the bayonet when it was pushed home.

With shrill tones the officers' whistles signaled the assault at 0645, and the men of Company C lurched forward in the attack. The going was rough: a steady though somewhat shielded uphill climb against a hail of machine gun and mortar fire. Men in

National Archives photo

Monument to the 371st Infantry near Ardeuil, France

The heretofore-surrendering Germans reacted to the predetermined signal by jumping back down behind their machine guns to deliver murderous fire into the ranks of the exposed Americans. This was the dirtiest of martial tricks—feigning surrender. Immediately the nearby Americans took 50 percent casualties. First Lt. James G. Ramsay, a platoon leader who had already been wounded, had had his men continue firing during the putative surrender, since his platoon had been receiving steady machine gun fire from farther down the German line. He too was now soon halted, and his platoon took cover in an abandoned trench.

As Company C found itself pinned down directly in front of the German machine guns, Companies B and D attacked on either side and managed to outflank the Germans who had halted the advance of Company C. The Americans launched their final attack on Hill 188 at midday, and their enfilading fire led many of the Germans to run north toward Bussy Farm, affording excellent targets to the Americans. Those who stood their ground were dispatched with the bayonet. As Maj. Joseph B. Pate, commander of the 1st Battalion, 371st Infantry, attested, "The final phase of this assault was extremely gruesome as our men could not be restrained from wreaking their vengeance upon the enemy who had so shamefully entrapped their comrades earlier that morning."[13]

During the fight for Hill 188, Company C captured one of the four or more machine guns that obstructed their battalion's advance. Corporal Stowers led his squad's attack on this gun, rallying the men as they crawled along the ground toward it, and they eventually killed or drove off the German soldiers who had manned it. The retreating Germans reassembled in a trench line to

front and behind began to fall, yet Corporal Stowers kept his men moving uphill into the teeth of the fight. Abruptly, the fire from the German trenches to the right ceased, and the Germans crawled up onto the parapets of their trenches, hands in the air and yelling "Kamerad," meaning that they wished to surrender.

The sense of relief felt by the men of Company C must have been overwhelming. Cautiously the Americans moved forward to round up the German prisoners and perhaps grab some good souvenirs or extra rations. Some must have thought that if they could hold this hill and repulse any imminent counterattack, there might just be time for some food and rest. The Americans were out in the open now, 100 meters from the Germans standing on the parapets, when another shrill whistle sounded, this time from within the German lines.

National Archives photo

93d Division soldiers relax in the Port of Hoboken upon their return from France, February 1919.

the rear, and Corporal Stowers again led his squad as it pressed the attack. As he advanced toward the second trench, Corporal Stowers was hit, gravely wounded by machine gun fire. Freddie lay still for a moment, and then, running on adrenaline, shook off the pain and continued to lead the charge. Eventually, he went down again, this time exhausted from his wounds. Uttering words of encouragement, he urged his men to press forward without him. Their collective blood was up, and the men of Freddie Stowers's battalion continued the attack inspired by his leadership and bravery in the face of overwhelming firepower. And so they pressed on and chased retreating Germans off Côte 188. Flushed from cover, the Germans fought in desperation, some dropping their weapons and shouting "Kamerad," this time in candor. A number of German soldiers fighting on that open plain north of Côte 188 died at the end of a bayonet mounted on a French Lebel rifle carried by a soldier of the 371st, reaping the crop sown with their earlier "Kamerad" ruse.

Somewhere back on Côte 188, Cpl. Freddie Stowers died in the company of soldiers he inspired in the midst of a great feat that would not be recognized for another seventy-three years. His family, in particular his wife Pearl and young daughter Minnie Lee Stowers, unaware of his bravery, mourned his death and then like so many widows and orphans of the Great War, moved on with their lives.

Deskbound at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in 2002, my mind often strays to the quieted trenches and poppy-strewn battlefields of the Great War. I think of the 371st obelisk, standing alone on the ridge, broken but unbowed, sentinel-like, maintaining silent watch over hallowed ground where, on 28 September 1918, 29 soldiers of the 371st were killed and 170, including 10 officers, were wounded. Three of the wounded, including two lieutenants, later died of their wounds.[14] I consider the inscription "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori." Whether it is in fact sweet to die for one's country can only really be known by soldiers like Freddie Stowers and Wilfred Owen.[15] I know this, that of all the acts of heroism known and unknown achieved by the soldiers of the A.E.F., one characteristic distinguished those of the black doughboy. Although the African American struggled valiantly "over there" for a country that he loved, he returned to a country that did not necessarily love him back.

The First World War truly ushered in the turbulent twentieth century. As a generation, the A.E.F. veterans endured the Great Depression, raised and nurtured those whom Tom Brokaw has called the "greatest generation," and—knowing firsthand the horrors of war—sent their sons and daughters back for the second and decisive round of the century's great blood argument. The Great War was a rendezvous with glory and destiny to men like Sgt. Alvin York and General Pershing. But for an American hero like Cpl. Freddie Stowers, it was an appointment with eternity on Hill 188.

The Author

Lt. Col. Taylor V. Beattie, a Regular Army special forces officer, teaches in the Department of Joint and Multinational Operations of the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He has served in Operations JOINT ENDEAVOR in Bosnia and ASSURED RESPONSE in Liberia and in assignments in Panama, Germany, Turkey, and Italy. He holds a bachelor's degree in cultural anthropology from the University of Delaware. His article "In Search of York: Man, Myth & Legend" appeared in the Summer–Fall 2000 issue of *Army History* (No. 50).

NOTES

1. Owen took the Latin words from Horace, *Odes*, Book 3, Ode 2 (On Virtue). They can be translated as "It is sweet and honorable to die for one's country."

2. *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe* (Washington, D.C., 1938), p. 361.

3. I am indebted to Lt. Col. Ronald Bowman, who in the course of this trip sparked in me an intense interest in and respect for the members of the American Expeditionary Forces of 1918.

4. Case Summary, n.d. [1991], subject: Medal of Honor, Corporal Freddie Stowers (Deceased), World War I, files of the Military Awards Branch, Total Army Personnel Command, Alexandria, Va.

5. Memo, Capt Ernest Samusson for company commanders, 371st Infantry, et al., 2 Dec 1918, printed in Chester D. Heywood, *Negro Combat Troops in the World War: The Story of the 371st Infantry* (Worcester, Mass., 1928), p. 235.

6. Arthur E. Barbeau and Florette Henri, *The Unknown Soldiers: African-American Troops in World War I* (New York, 1996) p. 111.

7. Heywood, *Negro Combat Troops.*, pp. 33–34; John J. Pershing, *My Experiences in the World War*, 2 vols. (New York, 1931), 1:37–38, 291; 2: 97.

8. It is believed that several of the Stowers families of Anderson County, South Carolina, trace their heritage to adjacent Hart County, Georgia, and to a slave owner there named Francis Gains Stowers. Interv, author with Judy Stowers Siddoway, 19 Mar 2002.

9. Registration Card no. 71, Freddie Stowers, microfilm no. 1,852,493, Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, copy provided to author by Judy Stowers Siddoway.

10. W. J. Megginson, *Black Soldiers in World War I: Anderson, Pickens, and Oconee Counties, South Carolina* (Seneca, S.C., 1994).

11. Heywood, *Negro Combat Troops*, pp.162–64.

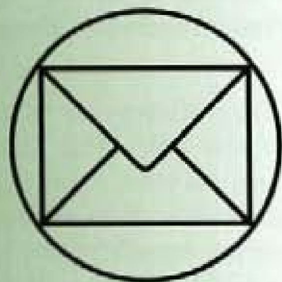
12. Department of the Army General Orders no. 15, 31 May 1991.

13. Ibid., pp. 164–69, with the quoted words on p. 169.

14. The soldiers killed and wounded are listed and the actions of the mortally wounded officers are detailed in ibid., pp. 272–74, 279–300.

15. Wilfred Owen served as a captain in the British Manchester Regiment. He was killed in action on 4 November 1918 while trying to lead his men across the Sambre Canal. See Wilfred Owen, *Collected Poems*, ed. C. Day Lewis (New York, 1965), p. x.

Letters to the Editor



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To the Editor:

I would like to briefly address Charles R. Anderson's review of my work, *The Battle of Ap Bac, Vietnam* (*Army History*, Spring–Summer 2002, pp. 39–40). We both agree that a reader seeking an overview of the battle should search elsewhere. My book, however, is a monograph and as such contains considerably more than a brief summary of the action. Indeed, my goal—which I believe I have accomplished—was to present the battle in detail and by so doing correct several of the mistakes and misperceptions that surround it still.

Although no one, least of all myself, can be immune to criticism, I do take exception to the overall tone and substance of the review. Certainly I should be taken to task for faulty or incomplete research, flawed logic, or misrepresentation of evidence, but I could not find such a cause in the review to generate such a harshness of tone. Nor do I agree that there is "much to question in Toczek's presentation and interpretation." Most armies fight as they have trained, and to describe the battle without presenting the belligerents' doctrine, training, and organizational backgrounds would not be in keeping with the book's purpose. My research did include numerous secondary sources, as one would expect in any monograph, but original message traffic, reports by the participants, and other contemporary documents constitute the majority of the book's evidence. As to the work's interpretations, if my conclusions have been "all known for decades," then the interpretations leading to those commonly accepted conclusions must not be questionable.

In short, I stand by my beliefs that the work achieves its purpose of detailing and explaining the causes and results of this often-misrepresented battle and that it possesses much more relevance and merit than the review suggests.

David M. Toczek
Harker Heights, Texas

In Memoriam: James F. Schnabel

Lt. Col. James F. Schnabel, who served as an Army historian from 1949 until his retirement from the Army in 1964, died on 18 December 2002 at the age of 84. He enlisted in the Army in 1942 and was commissioned as a field artillery officer in January 1943. After World War II, he served as a war crimes investigator in Germany. He was assigned to the Military History Section of General Headquarters, Far East Command, in Tokyo in 1949 and worked in that capacity until the last months of the Korean War. He came to the Office of the Chief of Military History in May 1953. In 1956 he went to Paris as chief historian for Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers, Europe. He returned to OCMH in 1960. After his retirement from the Army, he worked for twenty years as a staff historian in the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Colonel Schnabel was the author of *Policy and Direction: The First Year* (CMH, 1972), a volume in the series United States Army in the Korean War. He also wrote Volume 1, *1945–1947*, and coauthored Volume 3, *The Korean War*, of *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy.* Michael Glazier, Inc., first published these volumes without indexes in 1979; the Office of Joint History issued indexed editions of them in 1996 and 1998, respectively.

Continued from page 2

The Society of Military History will hold its seventieth annual meeting at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville on 1–4 May 2003. The theme of the meeting will be the military and society during periods of domestic crisis. Information about registering for the meeting is available at *http://www.smh-hq.org/2003conf*.

The Council on America's Military Past will hold its thirty-seventh annual military history conference on 7–11 May 2003 in St. Louis, Missouri. The conference will highlight papers on Army exploration of the American West, beginning with the Lewis and Clark expedition. Further information about the conference may be obtained at *http://www.campjamp.org/2003%20Conference.htm*.

Australian Army Publishes Vietnam War Conference Proceedings

The Army History Unit of the Australian Department of Defence, Canberra, has published *The Australian Army and the Vietnam War, 1962–1972: The 2002 Chief of Army's Military History Conference*, edited by Peter Dennis and Jeffrey Grey. The book contains twenty essays by conference participants, including papers by Center historian Dale Andradé; former Center historian Edward Drea; and Roger Spiller, George C. Marshall Professor of Military History at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. The volume may be purchased for AUD$20, a price that includes the cost of mailing, from the Army History Unit, CP4-2-31, Department of Defence, Canberra, ACT 2600, Australia.

New Center of Military History Publications

The Center of Military History has issued an updated version of its CD-ROM set entitled *United States Army and the Korean War*. This three-disk set reproduces in digital form four volumes of the series United States Army in the Korean War, five monographs relating to the Korean War, two pictorial studies of Korea in 1950–53, and the five commemorative brochures and five commemorative posters issued for the fiftieth anniversary of the war. Army publication account holders may order this CD-ROM set from the Army Publications Distribution Center–St. Louis. Members of the public may purchase this CD-ROM set from the Government Printing Office for $24 under order number 008–029–00365–1.

The Center has also issued a 28-page pamphlet by Richard W. Stewart entitled *The United States Army in Somalia, 1992–1994*. Dr. Stewart served in Operation CONTINUE HOPE in Somalia. This publication is also available to Army publication account holders from the Army Publications Distribution Center–St. Louis. It will be available for purchase from the Government Printing Office, but neither its order number nor its price had been determined by the time this issue of *Army History* went to press.

Center Publishes Annual Army Historical Program and Directory

The Army Center of Military History has issued the *Army Historical Program, Fiscal Year 2003*. This document reports the activities of the Center and other Army elements with substantial historical programs; lists works published, in progress, and projected; and presents Army Museum System statistics. The Center is also publishing an *Army Historical Directory, 2003*, listing the names, business addresses, and other contact information about Army historians and others associated with Army historical work. It is anticipated that the new directory will appear prior to the publication of this Winter 2003 issue of *Army History*. These publications are being distributed widely within the Army historical community; staffers who deal with Army historical work may request additional copies from R. Cody Phillips by phone at 202-685-2624 or by email at *phillrc@hqda.army.mil*.

Major Aarsen near Kandahar, Afghanistan

Army Historians Mobilized To Serve in the Middle East

Army Reserve Lt. Col. Thomas M. Ryan, 90th Reserve Command historian, has been mobilized to serve as Third Army historian in Kuwait. In that capacity he succeeds Army Reserve Maj. John Aarsen, who was mobilized for that position in May 2002. When not in uniform, Aarsen is director of the Airborne and Special Operations Museum in Fayetteville, N.C. He is slated to continue engaging in

historical duties for Third Army until May 2003. During Major Aarsen's absence, Dr. John Duvall has been serving as interim director of the Airborne and Special Operations Museum.

Military History Offices Issue Vietnam War and Korean War Publications

The Office of Joint History has published a book by Willard J. Webb, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1969–1970.* This 380-page volume may be purchased from the Government Printing Office for $46 under order number 008-000-00752-7.

The Marine Corps History and Museums Division has issued a 132-page, softcover booklet by retired Marine Brig. Gen. Edwin H. Simmons, *Frozen Chosin: U.S. Marines at the Changjin Reservoir*, in its Marines in the Korean War Commemorative Series. This publication may be purchased from the Government Printing Office for $17 under order number 008-055-00229-0.

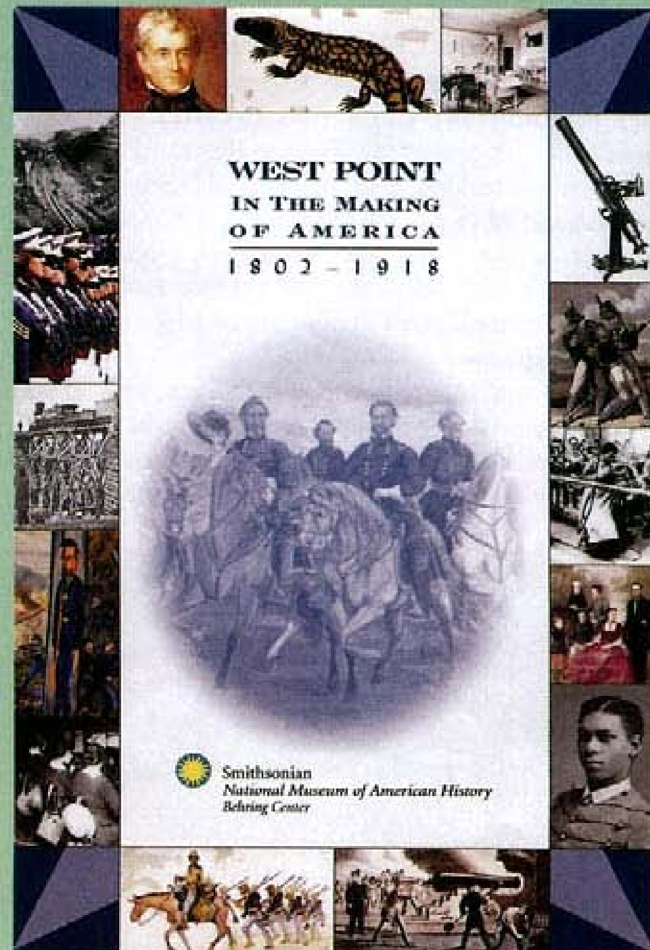
Special Forces Association Issues Golden Jubilee History

The Special Forces Association has issued a 344-page, magazine-format history, *Special Forces: The First Fifty Years: The United States Army Special Forces, 1952–2002.* The publication includes contributions by CMH Histories Division chief Richard Stewart, John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School historian Kenneth Finlayson, former U.S. Army Special Operations Command historian Joseph R. Fischer, and the staff of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Museum. It may be purchased for $25 by sending a check and the order form posted at *http://www.sfahq.org/50th_years_order_form.htm* to the address shown on the form.

Smithsonian Mounts Military Academy Bicentennial Exhibit

To celebrate the bicentennial of the United States Military Academy, the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., in October 2002 opened an extensive special exhibit, "West Point in the Making of America, 1802–1918." The exhibit will remain on view on the third floor of the museum until January 2004. Prepared with support from the U.S. Army Center of Military History and the Army Historical Foundation, the exhibit focuses on the lives of some famous and some less well known West Point graduates who helped shape the United States as it grew from a new nation to a world power between 1802 and 1918.

The exhibit also includes engaging activities for younger visitors, ages 5 and above—the opportunity to unpack a cadet footlocker in the Hands-on History Room (second floor) and to explore in the Hands-on Science Center (first floor) the trunk of Gouverneur K. Warren, Class of 1850, who collected natural history specimens for the Smithsonian during his exploration of the northern Great Plains in the 1850s. A brochure accompanying the exhibit unfolds to depict a double-page illustration, "Cadet Life at West Point," that first appeared in *Harper's Weekly* on 4 July 1868. Visitors seeking a more substantive souvenir may purchase a 160-page companion book, *West Point in the Making of America*, for $24.95. An additional shipping charge of $6.95 for domestic Fedex delivery applies to telephone orders, which may be placed by calling 202-343-1048. The Smithsonian has also created an excellent website, *http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/westpoint*, that captures virtually every aspect of the exhibit.



Continued from page 3

require coordination with the Center. Meanwhile, in Alaska the 172d Infantry Brigade is preparing for its conversion into a Stryker brigade. In conjunction with the Military Awards Branch of the Total Army Personnel Command, our force structure historians arranged for the issuance of a message sent worldwide regarding the determination of campaign credit for units that have served or are serving in Kosovo. While the Army has not yet announced an official campaign name covering combat operations in Afghanistan, actions are pending regarding unit decorations and service medals for individuals who have participated in the global war on terrorism. In other new developments, the 1st Information Operations Command was activated on 16 October at Fort Belvoir. It is the first unit to be organized under the new 53-series of tables of organization and equipment.

The Website Operations Activity has continued posting materials to CMH Online, including additional volumes from the Vietnam Studies monograph series. Plans call for the entire series to be available through the website during the early months of 2003. During the past quarter the CMH website continued to experience increasing numbers of visits. The Center's Digitization Committee conducted its annual review of the CMH priority list of collections to be digitized, but it determined that no changes to the rankings were necessary. Contractors at CMH are nearing completion of the project to digitize the third group of documents it has tackled, a set of materials which is really the combination of three collections: War Department and Department of the Army general orders, circulars, and bulletins. When this work is done, the contractors will turn their attention to the Center's collection of tables of organization and equipment.

The Field and International Branch continued to address field history issues in support of Operations NOBLE EAGLE and ENDURING FREEDOM. The branch coordinated with other headquarters elements and several major Army commands to provide historical support to these operations and facilitated the mobilization of three historians for the military history group serving with Third Army in Kuwait. Working in the branch, the 305th Military History Detachment continued to support the oral history and document-collection efforts connected with Operation NOBLE EAGLE. In addition, the branch conducted a certification visit to the Military Traffic Management Command and continued to be involved with European history offices in the Military History Working Group.

The Museum Division, while carrying on with the routine business of collections management, renovation, and certification, made further great strides toward establishing the National Museum of the United States Army (NMUSA). In a detailed reconnaissance, division staff members examined military museums throughout the United Kingdom and came back with a substantial body of materials to support our design process here. A study on necessary museum staffing levels has been completed, and from that study a preliminary organizational profile has been developed as well. Indeed, the progress proved sufficiently promising that the Army's vice chief of staff directed yet another $2.5 million into the NMUSA account to sustain the momentum with respect to site surveys, further planning, and work on collections and conservation.

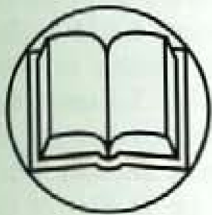
Production Services did yeoman work in support of the Histories Division as described above and also sustained its inventory by republishing fourteen of our most popular books and monographs. Its initiative to get CMH publications into CD continues to roll, with rave reviews for our second (Pacific campaigns) World War II CD-ROM publication and our updated Korean War CD-ROM. This is in addition to the sixteen traditional print projects still under way.

I think we can all agree that FY03 promises to be a busy one—particularly if its first quarter is any measure. Please keep up your own great work in support of the Army history program. Thanks.

Army Chaplain Museum exhibit of an altar, lectern, and podium handcrafted by German and Italian prisoners of war at Fort Devens, Massachusetts

U.S. Army Chaplain Museum Reopens

The U.S. Army Chaplain Museum marked its reopening at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, on 27 September 2002 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony keynoted by Army Chief of Chaplains Maj. Gen. Gaylord T. Gunhus. The museum had closed at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, in 1995 due to Army realignment. Other speakers at the ceremony were Chaplain (Col.) Harold Roller, commandant of the Chaplain School at Fort Jackson, and Director of Army Museums Judson E. Bennett. Located at 10100 Lee Road, Fort Jackson, the museum is open from 1300 to 1630, Tuesday through Thursday, and by appointment. Further information about the museum is available on the web at *http://www.usachcs.army.mil/museum/nav1/mainpage.html.*



Book Reviews

West Point: A Bicentennial History
Theodore J. Crackel
University Press of Kansas, 2002,
370 pp., $ 34.95

Review by Samuel Watson

The more things change, the more they stay the same. This might be the unofficial motto of West Point and the underlying thesis of Theodore Crackel's bicentennial history. The product of twenty years of research, Crackel's book will be the standard history for the next generation. Deeply rooted in a wide array of primary sources—a quality all too rare in histories of the Academy—and boasting forty-five pages of endnotes, it is by far the most scholarly account, the most comprehensive, and, in a field of mythmakers and polemics, the most balanced.

Crackel's narrative runs from the Revolution to the present. He structures the narrative around the tenures of the superintendents, with a set of common themes in each chapter: curriculum and mission, governance, cadet and instructor life, facilities construction, and discipline, leader development, and honor. The attention given to each varies by chapter, depending on the degree of change that occurred during the period in question. Crackel provides extensive attention to the academic, moral, and physical development of cadets; he reports more intermittently on military training and officer professional development, and indeed these themes often seem to fade from sight in his narrative. This will disappoint many Army readers, but it is a natural product of Crackel's focus on academics, which is in turn a product of his background and associations as an instructor, academic, and Academy insider close to many of those who shaped West Point's development during the past quarter-century. This background gave Crackel unrivaled access to Academy decision makers. His approach does have drawbacks, however: Crackel's attention to the Academy's mission—which he clearly believes, without explicitly stating as much, to be the development of mental discipline—is usually focused around curricular debates that naturally involve academic education rather than military training. While Crackel makes a persuasive historical case that caution is good, readers from backgrounds other than his will note that his work has a distinct, though usually implicit rather than overt, perspective: it is in effect a history from the inside—generally optimistic about the success of ordered progress, cautiously promulgated, but doubtful about the effects of rapid or less thoroughly considered change.

Many of Crackel's interpretations will be familiar to students of the Academy from his earlier book *West Point: An Illustrated History* (New York, 1991). These are usually well informed and balanced. Yet the interpretation for which Crackel is best known among scholars, that Thomas Jefferson founded the Academy as a way to produce Republican officers for a largely Federalist army, is less well supported than one might expect. Admitting that the records "are quite fragmentary," (p. 51) Crackel cites only three individuals to support his view that Jefferson sought to appoint Republicans as cadets, and only one of these actually attended the Academy. Crackel's argument, that the politician Jefferson naturally sought a means to reform the Army in order to make it a reliable instrument of public service, is eminently logical and almost certainly correct as far as it goes. But Crackel takes pains to press his interpretation above all others, dismissing arguments—each equally well supported by evidence—that Jefferson sought a national university, or at least a school for engineers or artillerymen. Some scholars, such as William B. Skelton in *An American Profession of Arms* (Lawrence, Kans., 1992), have read the evidence too restrictively by assigning the most limited motives—simply the creation of an artillery school—to Jefferson; others, such as George S. Pappas in *To The Point: The United States Military Academy, 1802–1902* (Westport, Conn., 1993), which given its length and detail remains an essential work despite its unfortunate lack of footnotes, have suggested too great a continuity with the school for artillerists developed by Henry Burbeck at West Point in 1800–1801. Crackel errs by dismissing both approaches out of hand; indeed, he barely mentions Burbeck and does not refer at all to Pappas or Skelton, either in his notes or bibliography, glaring—and surprising—omissions. Here, unfortunately, Crackel's work shares the polemic tendency of much scholarship on the Academy. Surely, given the dearth of hard evidence explaining Jefferson's motives, there is room for multiple interpretations; indeed, the ability to identify a range of causal factors usually strengthens an argument. (Whatever Jefferson's motives, I would argue that the ultimate significance of the early Academy lies not in Jefferson's intent, or anyone else's, but in the processes by which it actually developed officers and the outcomes it achieved.)

Crackel does recognize that Jefferson sought to make officers of Republicans, not Republicans of officers, a matter of partisan appointment that would persist throughout the

nineteenth century, though he relegates this fundamental distinction to a footnote. In the debates over the early Academy, Crackel is rightly laudatory of Sylvanus Thayer and critical of Jonathan Williams and Alden Partridge; he also gives important credit (a trend he began in his 1991 book) to Joseph Swift. Perhaps most significant for interpretations of the early Academy, Crackel observes that civil engineering was *not* the initial focus of the Thayer curriculum and that Thayer indeed resisted its introduction.

Crackel provides superb discussions of cadet life and the construction of facilities during the nineteenth century. His usually strong attention to curricular change dips, however, as he provides only two pages on the five-year program of the 1850s, and his treatment of West Point and the Civil War is, like most accounts of that period, rather brief. Here, as with his account of the secession crisis, one wishes that Crackel had had the time or pages to display his erudition to full effect by exploring what must have been an intensely interesting time for the cadets and for officer professional development. In particular, Crackel notes that nearly a quarter of cadets voted for Abraham Lincoln in a straw ballot in 1860. This is a substantially larger proportion than the usual accounts of politically conservative cadets would suggest, and it deserves some elaboration. It is consistent with the fact that Army officers, mostly West Pointers, left the Union for the Confederacy at a much lower rate than did civilian officials, both elected and appointed, from the South, or than southern-born medical students, the other occupational groups for which we have comparable data, and with the fact that Academy graduates left the Army at a rate lower than that of officers appointed directly from civil life without West Point socialization.

Crackel's title for his chapter on the period 1866–1902 is the best demonstration of his approach to the Academy's history. "Basking in the Glory" suggests, as Crackel emphasizes, not uncertainty, isolation, or mindless conservatism, but a reasoned, thoroughly considered approach to change that kept the Academy's mission—the education of mentally, morally, and militarily disciplined officers, capable of adapting to any mission—front and center. The Academy thus sustained a focus that civilian institutions lost as they abdicated to their students responsibility for curricular direction by introducing electives, a choice the Academy, Army, and nation could not afford. Crackel's chapter on the period 1903–1931 reinforces this emphasis on the value of incrementalism, focusing heavily on curriculum and construction. His judgment of Douglas MacArthur and most other "reformist" superintendents is ultimately negative. His assessment of superintendents Maxwell Taylor and Garrison Davidson in the chapter extending to 1960 is much more positive, due to their efforts at consensus building. These chapters focus on curricular debates and governance almost to the exclusion of cadet life, though there is more here than elsewhere on cadet military training. Crackel's account of the 1951 cheating scandal is rather brief, but he provides a superb analysis of the evolution of the honor code, including the ideal of nontoleration, for which he demonstrates a long chain of antecedents. His accounts of the 1976 scandal, the introduction of women and the reintroduction of racial and ethnic minorities, the tumult of the 1970s, and the reform efforts after 1976 are equally excellent. Crackel's accounts of the introduction of civilian professors, cadet life since the 1960s, and the reforms that produced the Cadet Leader Development System during the 1990s are also good, but he provides little discussion of efforts at officer professional development, and he is much less aggressive about providing conclusions on these topics than on those of curriculum and governance.

Crackel begins *West Point* by observing that "the history of the United States Military Academy (USMA) is more than the story of a military school on the Hudson River. In fact, the Academy's history is a reflection of the nation it serves, for West Point has mirrored the broader movements of American society. To understand West Point is to better understand the country its graduates are sworn to protect and defend." (p. 1) Crackel thus emphasizes that the introduction of women and minorities to West Point was hindered not only by resistance within the Academy but also by the conservatism of American society. On the other hand, hostility in the Academy to the appointment of women surely went well beyond that felt by society as a whole, as demonstrated by pervasive cadet resistance to the overwhelming mandate from Congress. Here, as in his discussions of discipline, hazing, honor scandals, and toleration, Crackel's evidence suggests the development of pernicious cadet subcultures, subversive of the Academy's disciplinary mission. Yet here as elsewhere (as, for example, with the 1902 Centennial), Crackel's insider perspective ultimately works to limit his attention to West Point as an American institution. He effectively establishes social, political, and cultural context and capably traces the balance of change and continuity within the Academy, but too rarely does he assume an overtly analytical stance to make the connections between them explicit. In fairness, the pressures of time and cost set limits to what he could do, but one wishes that he had had another hundred pages to perfect this already outstanding book.

Forthright and critical, yet ultimately and correctly celebratory of the Academy's success, Crackel consistently lends his voice to those, especially among the department heads who essentially constitute the Academic Board, that have cautioned against precipitate, ill-considered change or the diminution of standards, especially any that would draw cadet attention further from their core academic duties. Though the narrative is structured around the tenures of the superintendents, the perspective is definitely that of the Academic Board. Yet *plus ça change* works two ways,

warning conservatives that there has always been change, and Crackel's book may serve advocates of both continuity and reform. After all, the Academy *has* muddled through very successfully, despite both intense conservatism and occasional radical innovation. Indeed, the clash of innovation and conservation has surely benefited the Academy, as it does any institution. *West Point: A Bicentennial History* is a work for all students of West Point and American military education to ponder; it is being used in the West Point History Department's American military history course for incoming tactical officers, and it should be read by all concerned with the Academy's future.

Dr. Samuel Watson is an assistant professor of history at the Military Academy, where he teaches a course on Civil War America. He is the author of the portion of the Academy's pictorial bicentennial history dealing with the years to 1865 and has two essays forthcoming on the early Academy. His book on the Army officer corps in the borderlands of the early Republic (1783–1846) will be published by the University Press of Kansas in 2004; he is also working on books on Winfield Scott and on the Seminole Wars.

I Am the Guard
A History of the Army National Guard, 1636–2000
By Michael D. Doubler
Office of the Director, Army National Guard, 2001, 460 pp., $48.50

Review by Roger D. Cunningham

Dr. Michael D. Doubler, a retired colonel who served in both the Regular Army and the National Guard, presents a well-written history of America's citizen-soldiers in *I Am the Guard*. His work is the first comprehensive account of the Guard since John K. Mahon's *History of the Militia and the National Guard* (New York, 1983) appeared twenty years ago.

Beginning with the organization of the first militia regiments in Massachusetts in 1636, units of citizen-soldiers successfully defended their communities during the colonial period. Both militia and Continental Army units fought in most of the battles of the American Revolution. After independence was secured, our nation's founding fathers decided to provide for the common defense by relying primarily on a strong navy and a large militia, in order to avoid the expense, and threat, of a large standing army. Envisioning a force that could serve both state and federal governments, the Constitution authorized Congress "To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions." (Article I, Section 8) The Militia Act of 1792 required all free, able-bodied white males between the ages of 18 and 45 to enroll in the militia and provide their own weapons and equipment. The law also authorized the creation of state adjutants general to supervise the administration and training of the militia and to issue periodic reports.

As time went by, however, few states enforced this militia legislation. By the Mexican War, the nation found itself with an enrolled militia that existed only on paper, supplemented by a few volunteer militia companies that freely offered their time and service. These units became the basis for some of the volunteer regiments that fought in the Civil War. The 69th New York, formed in 1851, was a vital component of the Army of the Potomac's famed Irish Brigade, while the Washington Artillery of New Orleans, formed in 1838, became one of the best artillery units in the Confederate Army.

During the 1870s there was a resurgence of interest in the militia, and patriotic men began to reorganize volunteer companies across the country. States referred to these units as the organized militia or National Guard, and by 1888 they totaled more than 100,000 men. Labor disputes resulted in the Guard's playing a "highly visible role in strikebreaking" (p. 118), but some companies were little more than social clubs, whose members purchased gaudy dress uniforms and concentrated on preparing for competitive drills and appearing in ceremonies instead of training for campaigns in the field. The poor readiness for active service of many National Guard units during the Spanish-American War led to the Militia Act of 1903 (Dick Act), which greatly strengthened federal oversight while improving the organized militia's arms, equipment, and funding.

When the United States entered World War I, the citizen-soldiers who manned the newly created National Guard divisions were much better prepared to fight. Eighteen of these divisions deployed to France with the American Expeditionary Forces, and Guardsmen earned a solid reputation in combat. The author points to the black 369th Infantry, formerly the 15th New York, which fought under French command, as "the National Guard regiment with arguably the best combat record in the war." (p. 178) During its 191 days in combat, longer than any other American regiment, the "Hell Fighters" from Harlem never lost a trench line or a prisoner to enemy action. Nineteen National Guard divisions also proudly served in both the European (nine) and Pacific (ten) theaters during World War II. The heavy casualties that the 29th Infantry Division (Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia) suffered from its D-Day landing on OMAHA Beach until the end of the fighting in Europe caused its veterans to maintain that there were actually three divisions during the war—one at the front, one in hospitals, and one in cemeteries.

After the war, the creation of the Air Force as a separate service led to the National Guard's splitting into the Army and Air National Guards. The peacetime draft provided the bulk of the Korean War's manpower and reduced the Army's reliance on the National Guard as a combat reserve. Only two of its divisions were selected to serve in Korea, with two more deployed to Germany. Smaller numbers of Guardsmen later served in Vietnam

How the National Guard Got Its Name

In 1824–25 the Marquis de Lafayette, who had served as a youthful major general in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War, revisited the United States. One of the many militia units that turned out to honor Lafayette was New York City's 2d Battalion, 11th Regiment of Artillery (perpetuated today by Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 107th Support Group, New York National Guard), and that unit renamed itself the "Battalion of National Guards" to honor his command of the *Garde Nationale de Paris* during the French Revolution. Before sailing back to France, Lafayette encountered the battalion in New York City on Bastille Day in 1825. He left his carriage and walked down the line of troops, shaking each officer's hand.

As time passed, other state militia organizations adopted the title "National Guard." In 1861 Connecticut became the first state to adopt it for all its militia units. By the Spanish-American War, most states had followed suit. Congress applied the name nationwide in the National Defense Act of 1916.

General Lafayette reviews the Battalion of National Guards in New York, 1825

and during the Persian Gulf War. Today, the National Guard is an integral part of the Total Force, and its units are regularly deployed as part of international humanitarian and peacekeeping operations in locales ranging from the Sinai desert to the Balkans.

Dr. Doubler's narrative is not without a few mistakes and omissions. The Regular Army added six black regiments in 1866, (p. 110) and they were reduced to four only when Congress cut the Army's strength three years later. The members of the Mexican Punitive Expedition never "splashed across the Rio Grande" (p. 159) from landlocked Columbus, New Mexico, to pursue Pancho Villa, and Connecticut also provided a unit of black Guardsmen to the 93d Division during World War I. (p. 179) The author's coverage is also heavily skewed toward the present. One-quarter of the book covers the short period from 1970 to 2000, with an especially detailed discussion of the Guard's participation in Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM. In fact, the thirty-two pages devoted to the Persian Gulf War—"the first and only war in American history fought without National Guard ground maneuver units" (p. 384)—almost equal the forty pages Doubler uses to discuss the Guard's service in both world wars. Nevertheless, the author generally does a nice job of pointing out both the strengths and the weaknesses of the National Guard as it evolved from a strictly local defense force to an instrument of global force projection.

Two cosmetic changes to *I Am the Guard* would have better linked the narrative to the military heritage that Guardsmen so proudly celebrate in their units' lineage and honors. While the book does reproduce many interesting historic photos and prints, its final layout should also have taken greater advantage of the National Guard's excellent Heritage Painting series. Produced by some of America's finest military illustrators, these prints depict Guardsmen in peace and war, much like the U.S. Army in Action series published by the Center of Military History. Only four of these prints were used, all on the book's dust jacket. There also should have been a depiction, either spread throughout the text or collected in an appendix, of the division and brigade patches that Guardsmen have worn proudly in combat. The author points out that the 28th Infantry Division's "punishing casualties" in Europe during World War II caused its veterans to refer to the red keystone patch honoring their Pennsylvania origins as "the bloody bucket." (p. 206) Readers of this book should see that patch.

Roger D. Cunningham is a retired Army lieutenant colonel. He began his military career as a military police officer and in this capacity served for three years as a branch adviser to National Guard and Reserve units in Texas and Louisiana. He later served as a foreign area officer in Pakistan, Egypt, and Nepal. He was the U.S. Defense Attaché in Kathmandu in 1991–92. His article "Shaking the Iron Fist: The Mexican Punitive Expedition of 1919" appeared in the Winter 2002 issue of Army History *(No. 54).*

Mobile, 1865: Last Stand of the Confederacy
By Sean Michael O'Brien
Praeger, 2001, 270 pp., $26.95

Review by Roger D. Cunningham

In the spring of 1865, Federal commanders conducted two eleventh-hour campaigns against their Confederate foes in Alabama—Bvt. Maj. Gen. James H. Wilson's capture of Selma and Maj. Gen. Edward R. S. Canby's attack on Mobile. Both operations were quite successful, but they were completely overshadowed by more significant events far to the northeast—the fall of Richmond and Petersburg, the surrender of General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, and the tragic assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. Thus the Union victories in central and southern Alabama were generally ignored when they occurred and have, in large measure, been overlooked ever since. In *Mobile, 1865: Last Stand of the Confederacy*, Sean Michael O'Brien provides a detailed chronicle of the fighting that captured the last Confederate stronghold on the Gulf Coast.

Many Americans are familiar with Rear Adm. David Farragut's famous command, "Damn the torpedoes. Full speed ahead!" during the great naval battle that closed Mobile Bay to Confederate blockade runners in August 1864, but few know anything about the land campaign that finally captured the "Gulf City" eight months later. General Joseph Johnston called Mobile "the best fortified place in the Confederacy," (p. 13) but when General Canby's 45,000-man Federal force finally moved against the city's impressive fortifications in March 1865 it faced only 9,000 gray-clad defenders under the command of Maj. Gen. Dabney H. Maury.

Canby decided to attack Maury's defenses on the northeastern end of Mobile Bay, and the campaign basically involved two elaborate siege operations—one conducted against Spanish Fort, which ended on 8 April with the Confederate defenders escaping over a makeshift foot bridge across a marsh, and one against Fort Blakely, a few miles to the north, which fell to a bloody Federal assault on 9 April, the same day that Lee surrendered to Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox. Within three days of Fort Blakely's fall, the last of Maury's troops evacuated Mobile, and the city's mayor surrendered it to Canby.

General Wilson and the Selma Raid

While Maj. Gen. Edward Canby assaulted southern Alabama, Bvt. Maj. Gen. James Harrison Wilson led a 13,500-man cavalry corps on a raid through the northern and central sections of the state and on to Macon, Georgia. Wilson—who had graduated from West Point in 1860 and started the war as a brevet second lieutenant in the topographical engineers—was among the most talented of the Union Army's "boy generals." By late 1864 he was commanding the Cavalry Corps, Military Division of the Mississippi.

Like Canby's Mobile campaign, Wilson's thirty-day raid was generally ignored by the press when it occurred, despite the fact that Wilson's force, which was not accompanied by foot soldiers, was larger than any similar mounted organization engaged in an independent operation during the Civil War. Wilson also accomplished something else no other Union officer had done; he defeated Confederate Maj. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest at the battles of Ebenezer Church (Plantersville) and Selma. Shortly after reaching Macon, some of his men captured Jefferson Davis and his party as they were fleeing south from Virginia. A Canadian cavalry historian called his raid "one of the most remarkable cavalry operations of the war."[1]

After the war, Wilson served as a lieutenant colonel in the Regular Army until 1870, when he was discharged at his own request. He then became a successful businessman. He returned to active duty during the Spanish-American War as a major general of volunteers and served in the Puerto Rico campaign. He commanded U.S. troops in Peking in 1900. A special act of Congress, passed at the behest of President McKinley in February 1901, enabled him to rejoin the Regular Army as a brigadier general and retire at that rank the following month. Before his death in 1925, Wilson was one of the last four surviving Union Army generals as well as the last surviving graduate in his Military Academy class.

Courtesy, Roger D. Cunningham

General Wilson in 1865

Note

1. George T. Denison, *A History of Cavalry from the Earliest Times with Lessons for the Future* (1877, 2d ed., London, 1913), p. 386, quoted in Stephen Z. Starr, *The Union Cavalry in the Civil War*, 3 vols. (Baton Rouge, 1979–85), 1: 45.

If Union forces had captured Mobile after Farragut's 1864 naval victory, or even earlier, the event could have significantly expedited the end of the war. Delaying until the spring of 1865, however, doomed Canby's campaign to irrelevance and cost the Union Army almost 1,700 senseless casualties. As General Grant summed up the Gulf City's capture: "It finally cost lives to take it when its possession was of no importance, and when, if left alone, it would within a few days have fallen into our hands without any bloodshed whatever." (p. 233)

Some of the Federal blood that was shed at Mobile belonged to a division comprising nine regiments of U.S. Colored Troops (USCT)—10 percent of Canby's army and the largest organization of black soldiers assigned to a combat role in the war's western theater. Brig. Gen. John P. Hawkins, Canby's brother-in-law, commanded the division, and Hawkins's men were described by one officer as "burning with an impulse to do honor to their race." (p. 90) In spite of allegations that some of the black soldiers sought revenge for an earlier massacre of USCT personnel at Fort Pillow, Tennessee, by killing Confederate soldiers after they surrendered at Fort Blakely, the capable performance of the African American troops helped to convince Congress to add the first black regiments to the Regular Army a year later.[1]

My only criticism of this well-written book is the fact that the author chose to rely primarily on published works and consulted no archival sources outside Alabama. The published works were generally firsthand accounts, but surely some additional documents could have been found in the National Archives that would have contributed to his story. His appendix summarizing the postwar lives of sixty-six of the book's soldiers, half of them "Yankees," would almost certainly have benefited from the personal data that he could have gleaned from the Federal veterans' pension records stored in Washington.

Note

1. In April 1864 Confederate forces under Maj. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest attacked Fort Pillow, a Union outpost about thirty-five miles north of Memphis, and killed almost two-thirds of the black artillerymen defending it, some of them after they had surrendered. Outraged Northerners branded the action a massacre, and "Remember Fort Pillow!" became a USCT battle cry. For details, see Noah Andre Trudeau, *Like Men of War: Black Troops in the Civil War, 1862–1865* (Boston, 1998), pp. 156–69. Trudeau also discusses the fighting at Fort Blakely.

Wingless Eagle: U.S. Army Aviation through World War I
By Herbert A. Johnson
University of North Carolina Press, 2001, 298 pp., $ 34.95

Review by Edgar F. Raines, Jr.

On 20 March 1916, *Aerial Age* published a W. A. Rogers cartoon that reflected the frustration of much of the informed aeronautical constituency with the condition of military aviation in the United States. As Maj. Gen. John J. Pershing's expedition marched into Mexico in pursuit of Pancho Villa, Rogers's cartoon portrayed a volcano labeled Mexico erupting in the background with Mexican sharpshooters peering out from behind an intermediate ridgeline. In the foreground, standing on the viewer's side of the Rio Grande, a perplexed commander of the U.S. Army's Southern Department, Maj. Gen. Frederick Funston, contemplated a grounded eagle labeled "U.S. Aviation Corps." The bird sported a ball and chain and shortened wings. A sign hanging from its neck proclaimed "Wings Clipped by Congress." Rogers's caption summarized the situation as he saw it: "A Perfectly Good War Eagle—What There Is of Him." Some seventy-five years later, this cartoon provided the inspiration for the title of Herbert A. Johnson's new book, *Wingless Eagle: U.S. Army Aviation through World War I.* (The cartoon appears on p. 176.)

Johnson, the Hollings Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of South Carolina, was an officer in the Air Force Reserve until his retirement in 1987. This manuscript began as a study for the Air Force on the impact of public opinion on the development of Air Force policy until 1950. Over the years Johnson narrowed his focus to the early period of flight, ending with the Armistice of 1918. He places his major emphasis on the period from 1909 to March 1917, covering the American Air Service's participation in World War I with only an epilogue. Johnson simultaneously broadened the scope of his work to include the evolution of thought about air service doctrine in both the ground Army and its air arm, the nexus between the fledgling aviation industry and the military, and the interaction between military aviators and influential civilians. By the time Johnson submitted his manuscript to the University of North Carolina Press and I became one of its readers, the text consisted of a series of essays dealing with these themes. In revision Johnson has shortened the manuscript, more closely integrated the essays, and rethought some of his arguments. The manuscript was impressive; the book is even more so. My initial evaluation for the press is even more apropos for the book: *Wingless Eagle* is clearly "the most important account of the early years of military aviation in the United States since the 1943 publication of Chandler and Lahm's *How Our Army Grew Wings*."

Johnson argues that the young officers who volunteered for aviation duty quickly developed a strong camaraderie and a propensity to advocate the offensive use of what came to be called "air power." This stance was not popular with the Signal Corps leadership that administered the pre–World War I aviation program. Generally, these administrators wanted to emphasize information gathering and transmission in order to forestall attempts to create an aviation branch separate from the Signal Corps.

Aviation captured the popular imagination after 1909, when the Signal Corps purchased the first military

aircraft, but it evoked only limited congressional interest and scant appropriations. Military aviators were both helped and harmed by the efforts of an "aeronaut constituency," to use Johnson's term, made up of members of the nation's financial and social elites. Active in organizations such as the Aero Club of America, they sought to influence the development of national aviation policy. Men of influence, they provided young military pilots with easy access to Congress. These officers early became habituated to bypassing the chain of command and going directly to Congress and influential members of the elite. Many members of the aeronautical constituency were also participants in socially prestigious National Guard regiments, and close ties developed between Regular Army pilots and the Guard.

At the same time Army reformers were attempting to create a "new Army," one in which the chain of command from the president as commander-in-chief to the forces in the field was unchallenged, professional considerations replaced politics as the major factor influencing internal Army organization, and the Army chief of staff was the undisputed senior professional military adviser to the president and secretary of war. The years between 1910 and 1917 represented the height of the conflict between these "progressive" reformers and their opponents. By virtue of their allies and their actions, Army pilots became associated with the "Old Army" faction. Some senior Army leaders, most notably Maj. Gen. Tasker H. Bliss, assistant to the chief of staff from 1915 to 1917, considered them undisciplined and too political.

The aeronautical community, in turn, regarded the General Staff as narrow-minded and reactionary concerning the employment of aviation in combat. However, after studying the evolution of early aviation doctrine in detail, Johnson found the General Staff well informed and progressive. Beginning in August 1914 the American military attaché network in Europe amassed considerable information about the organization and employment of aircraft by the European belligerents. After the Staff's publication of the policy paper "Military Aviation" in late 1915, no policy differences remained between the General Staff and the most advanced members of the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps on how to employ aircraft in combat. Johnson describes the notion of a reactionary General Staff as a political myth that served to deflect criticism from the politicians and aviators themselves for failures in the military aviation program.

The ultimate responsibility, however, for the inadequacy of American military aircraft lay in the stunted development of the American aircraft industry. While inadequate congressional support played a role, the Wright-Curtiss patent litigation prevented capital from entering the industry and inhibited the exchange of ideas with European aircraft designers. The result was poorly designed and underpowered aircraft that, lacking the lift to carry armament, remained unarmed and were thus more dangerous to their own aircrew than to any enemy. The Signal Corps leadership contributed to the problem by ignoring safety concerns while trying to paper over problems. Both the Signal Corps leadership and the aeronautical community flagrantly oversold the strengths of the pre-1917 military aviation program, inaccurately terming it the best in the world. A series of fatal accidents involving military aircraft, the court-martial of Lt. Col. Lewis E. Goodier, Sr., for attempting to expose conditions at the Signal Corps' San Diego Flying School, and the failure of the 1st Aero Squadron to adequately support Pershing's Mexican expedition at last revealed the inadequacies of the Signal Corps program to both Congress and the public. But the increased funding and reorganization came too late, and the attitudes and habits created in the prewar period continued into the Great War. Johnson judges American military aviation during the entire period 1907 to 1918 to have been "a failure."

This summary can only hint at the complexity and sophistication of Johnson's argument. Marvelous as this volume is, some qualifications need to be entered. First, the aeronautical constituency hardly spoke with a single voice. After all, the Rogers cartoon blamed Congress not the General Staff for the inadequacy of the American aviation program. Second, Johnson's discussion of the use of aerial observers in directing artillery fire on the Western Front is imprecise. This may reflect the attaché report the author cites, but Shelford Bidwell's and Dominick Graham's book, *Firepower: British Army Weapons and Theories of War* (London, 1982), and Boyd Dastrup's *King of Battle: A Branch History of the U.S. Army's Field Artillery* (Fort Monroe, Va., 1992) would have provided the necessary context in which to place the report. Third, Johnson is highly critical of the failure of Congress to provide the funds required to keep American military aviation abreast of European developments between 1909 and 1917. While more could and should have been done, Johnson, in my view, holds Congress to an impossible standard given the prevailing deep-seated provincialism of American politics and the immature nature of most American thought about international relations during the period. The major European powers were engaged in a full-blown arms race until August 1914 and a titanic military struggle thereafter. In the absence of any call to arms by either Presidents Taft or Wilson prior to 1917, Congress could have hardly matched the European aerial fleets. Fourth, granted that the American military attaché network performed as well as Johnson claims—and my own research in the era would validate his argument—the reports they sent back focused on doctrine, tactics, and techniques. For obvious reasons, critical engineering data did not become available to the attachés until after the American declaration of war. Given the fact that American inferiority in the air was qualitative as well as quantitative, the engineering data were absolutely critical. Postwar claims by Air Service

leaders that they were ignorant of European developments would thus have a limited validity. Without the aircraft capable of performing the missions, all the attaché reports on doctrine, tactics, and technique remained theory that the Americans were incapable of putting into practice. Finally, Johnson's judgment that the American Air Service was a "failure" during World War I strikes me as much too harsh. The War Department and the Army as a whole experienced great difficulty mobilizing and fielding a well-armed, technically trained, and tactically sophisticated military force. While the American Air Service might be evaluated a failure judged against ideal norms, and the Germans might even dispute that, a more interesting question is how did the Air Service effort compare to the efforts of the other arms and services in the American Expeditionary Forces. I suspect it was very near the norm, more successful than some and less successful than others.

As this last observation indicates, Johnson reaches provocative conclusions that force his readers to think beyond the material presented. At the same time he is fair minded, laying out both the supporting and opposing evidence before he makes a judgment. In his discussion of congressional underfunding of the air arm, for example, he considers the nature of the prewar federal tax base—just how much revenue Congress actually had available. In so doing he pushes his research into an area where no military historian has yet ventured, but one that a historian in the future will ignore at his or her peril. Too often military historians, influenced by the model of civil-military relations implicit in the "New Army" reforms of the early twentieth century, focus almost exclusively on the military's relationship with the executive branch, slighting Congress. Johnson restores that institution to center stage, where it belongs. Likewise his insights into the role of public opinion, especially elite opinion, are very powerful. Reflecting the origins of this volume, his research is most comprehensive in these areas. But Johnson's arguments are much broader than this rather narrow evidentiary base. He engages in informed speculation—as in his linking of prewar tensions over promotion within the air arm to wartime feuds between the Air Service leaders—that could easily provide dissertation and article material for the next generation of students of military aviation in the United States. He also ties military reform to the broader themes of American political and cultural history. But if the reader concludes that this is a niche book, of interest only to historians of the U.S. Air Force, then I have failed to adequately convey the conceptual richness and originality of the author's arguments. *Wingless Eagle* should be read by all students of civil-military relations, the Progressive Era, the evolution of warfare in the twentieth century, and institutional change. The University of North Carolina Press has produced a handsome volume worthy of the high-level scholarship inside.

Dr. Edgar F. Raines, Jr., is a historian in the Histories Division of CMH. He earned his doctorate in history at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where he wrote a dissertation on "Major General J. Franklin Bell and Military Reform: The Chief of Staff Years, 1906–1910." He is the author of Eyes of Artillery: The Origins of Modern U.S. Army Aviation in World War II *(CMH, 2000).*

Tuxedo Park
A Wall Street Tycoon and the Secret Palace of Science That Changed the Course of World War II
By Jennet Conant
Simon & Schuster, 2002, 331 pp., $26

Review by Keir B. Sterling

Occasionally, books come along which provide new perspectives on the scientific accomplishments that helped win the Second World War. This well-written account is one of these. The author is descended from several eminent Harvard chemists, one of whom was her grandfather James B. Conant, longtime president of that institution and later U.S. ambassador to Germany. James Conant knew and worked with the subject of this book during World War II.

Largely overlooked by historians, Alfred Lee Loomis (1887–1975) played an invaluable behind-the-scenes role in this country's military research and development arena during World War II. Born into a socially prominent family of New York physicians, the well-educated Loomis was a graduate of Andover and Yale and held a law degree from Harvard. His rather distant father died when Loomis was a sophomore in college. Fortunately, however, Henry Lewis Stimson, two decades older than Loomis, was his first cousin. Twice secretary of war (serving under Presidents Taft, Franklin Roosevelt, and Truman) and secretary of state under President Hoover, Stimson looked upon Loomis as the son that the older man could never have, and was, until his death in 1950, Loomis's supportive surrogate father and mentor. In turn, Loomis helped his older cousin make some profitable investments, thus enabling Stimson to pursue his political career. After five years' practice as a junior attorney and then a partner in Stimson's law firm, Loomis, who had strong interests in science from childhood, spent World War I as an ordnance officer at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, where he rose to the grade of lieutenant colonel. While serving there, he invented the ballistics device known as the Aberdeen chronograph, which measured shell velocity. He also became an authority on tank construction.

In 1919 Loomis and his brother-in-law Landon Thorne reorganized a Wall Street investment-banking firm. They enjoyed enormous success in the public utilities and electric power fields and, anticipating the Crash of

1929, made—and retained—many millions. They also developed the large holding company concept. In 1931, for example, they jointly purchased Hilton Head Island, S.C., at the bargain price of $120,000 and netted over $11 million when they sold it twenty years later. In that same year, however, they also invested heavily in *Whirlwind*, an expensive America's Cup yachting entry, which came in dead last.

In 1934 Loomis quit Wall Street, in part because the Emergency Banking Act prohibited investment bankers from serving as directors of member banks of the Federal Reserve. Having turned his back on banking in his late forties, and with no particular interests beyond maintaining ties with his family and friends, Loomis returned to his first love, the physical sciences. Fascinated by the subject from boyhood, he had already built a laboratory near his home in the exclusive New York suburb of Tuxedo Park. There he indulged his own scientific proclivities while providing major financial support to a number of professional scientists, beginning with Robert W. Wood, a Johns Hopkins physics professor he had befriended during the war.

In the process of tutoring Loomis in physics in the 1920s, Wood developed a powerful oscillator and, with Loomis's aid, conducted research on ultrasound waves and spectroscopy. Through Wood, Loomis met and hosted a number of European and American physicists, including such luminaries as Albert Einstein, Niels Bohr, Enrico Fermi, and Karl Compton, some of whom already held, or were eventually to win, Nobel prizes. Loomis also bankrolled dozens of scientific conferences, meetings, lectures, and dinners. Some of the scientists working in Loomis's lab tutored his three sons in their spare time. From 1931, the day-to-day lab operations were overseen by Loomis's wealthy younger protégé Garret Hobart III, grandson of William McKinley's first vice-president, whose sexy Belgian-born wife Manette subsequently became Loomis's mistress and later his second wife.

In 1936 Loomis met Ernest Lawrence, a brilliant and personable young physicist at the University of California who had built a cyclotron there and become involved in a variety of projects involving high-energy physics, notably radiation treatments in medicine, the emerging and secretive fields of radio detection and ranging (later to be known as radar), and atomic research. Lawrence and Loomis immediately became close friends and collaborators. Having worked in hydroelectric power development, Loomis was knowledgeable about many aspects of Lawrence's work. Scientific research in the 1930s was virtually impossible without private funding, which was scarce because of the Great Depression, and competition for support was keen. A dubious public, unhappy because of perceptions that technology had thrown many people out of work, further complicated the situation.

With the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939, Loomis devoted most of his energies to supporting and expanding Lawrence's laboratory in California and to similar initiatives at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Handsome, magnetic, yet modest and reticent, Loomis—who was perhaps one of the ten wealthiest men in America at the time—was perfectly comfortable when operating in the background, letting Lawrence and other scientists enjoy growing acclaim for their work. In large part through Loomis's efforts, Lawrence, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for physics in late 1939, was able to enlist support from other scientists, foundations, Wall Street financiers, businessmen, and philanthropists. The Rockefeller Foundation gave Lawrence $1.15 million—then regarded as a remarkable sum—for his new and expanded cyclotron project in 1940, and with Loomis's encouragement other foundations lent their support. Loomis also provided financial aid to complementary projects at MIT and Harvard. Recognizing that America's entry into World War II was not far distant, he focused on educating himself about the physics of radar and atomic energy. This involved trips to England and much travel between the East Coast and California.

In June 1940 President Roosevelt appointed Dr. Vannevar Bush, one of the scientists at MIT who had collaborated with Loomis, to head the National Defense Research Committee (NDRC), and Bush enlisted the Tuxedo Park experimenter to take charge of a special NDRC microwave committee. One of the committee's major challenges involved overcoming the sometimes awkward interrelationship among the military, the research community, and industry. Loomis's many connections in industry and in the financial and business world, coupled with his indispensable ties to Stimson, who again became secretary of war in July 1940, helped him to resolve such problems. Ably assisted by Lawrence, Loomis worked with British scientists in 1940 to step up the pace of various aspects of radar research. Closing down his Tuxedo Park laboratory for the duration, Loomis spent most of the war years working in rapidly expanded facilities at MIT. There, with a staff that ultimately numbered 4,000, including 500 physicists, and a monthly budget of some $4 million, the strong-willed and charismatic Loomis played a direct role in the scientific research and testing that led to the development of the LORAN long-range navigation system, together with ground-controlled approach instruments for pilots and over 100 other systems, including antisubmarine and "blind bombing" devices, gun-laying radar, and methods for downing German V–2 rockets.

The author characterizes Loomis, Lawrence, and Compton, who was president of MIT, as "visionaries of the wartime laboratory," (p. 278) but

as she makes clear, this was accomplished at considerable personal cost to Loomis. His first marriage was characterized by his wife's depression, a condition that tragically afflicted many other family members as well. Loomis's 1945 divorce and remarriage to Manette Hobart ruptured personal relations with two of his three sons and many of their friends. He terminated his Tuxedo Park laboratory, sold his interests there, and turned down various postwar job offers. Nevertheless, he and Manette remained devoted to each other until his death.

President Truman awarded Loomis the Medal of Freedom for his wartime exploits, and the British presented him their Medal for Service in the Cause of Freedom, but Loomis then faded into the background and was largely forgotten. He died in 1975 at the age of 87. Conant's fast-paced and well-written account places Loomis's accomplishments in the context of American scientific achievements during World War II.

Dr. Keir B. Sterling has been a civilian historian with the Army since 1983 and command historian for the U.S. Army Combined Arms Support Command at Fort Lee, Va., since 1998. He edited the Biographical Dictionary of American and Canadian Naturalists and Environmentalists *(Westport, Conn., 1997). His article "U.S. Army Contributions to American Natural Science, 1864–1890," appeared in the Summer 1997 issue of* Army History *(No. 42).*

On the Road to Stalingrad
Memoirs of a Woman Machine Gunner
By Zoya M. Smirnova-Medvedeva, edited and translated by Kazimiera J. Cottam
New Military Publishing, 1997, 130 pp., paper, $11.95

Review by G. Alan Knight

World War II, known still to Russians as the Great Patriotic War, had a profound effect on that nation's history and its relationship with the world community of nations. As Alexander Werth stated, "The mystique of a great national war, of a life-and-death struggle took deep root in the Russians' consciousness within a very short time."[1]

On the Road to Stalingrad presents the daily life and times of Zoya Medvedeva, a 19-year-old female Red Army machine gunner serving in Ukraine during the critical period of 1941–1942. Germany invaded the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941 and by October had come close to victory in battling a Red Army whose leadership had been decimated by the 1937 purges and burdened by a lack of experience with blitzkrieg warfare, training shortfalls, and the pervasive and pernicious impact of Stalin's leadership.

Medvedeva's memoir paints a picture of bravery and remarkable unit esprit de corps within her machine gun company in the face of overwhelming odds. However, officer leadership appears amateurish and not particularly dynamic. With some exceptions, the conflict at Medvedeva's level was a come-as-you-are war, in which the successful were the survivors who had learned by doing.

This slim volume, constituting the first of Medvedeva's wartime memoirs, covers her actions during her unit's defensive operations at Odessa and Sevastopol. While addressing her performance as a machine gunner, her account also describes her frequent utilization as a company medic, supplementing the assigned medical noncommissioned officer by providing medical assistance to the wounded much as would a contemporary U.S. Army nonmedical soldier trained as a combat lifesaver. The Red Army seems to have detailed female combatants to medical duties frequently during this period. Medvedeva's account also reports on her own treatment after she was seriously wounded. It is a testament to her adjustment to disability, as her wounds caused severe and permanent vision impairment.

Medvedeva's memoirs provide a personal but officially sanitized window into her unit's combat operations. The vignettes selected and their wording are carefully chosen, sometimes creating an air of artificiality. The author exhibits little sentimentality, much deference to leadership figures, and exceptional modesty as she recounts her own actions while emphasizing the sacrifices of her fellow soldiers.

Notwithstanding her severe wounds and only partial recovery, Medvedeva continued in service and ultimately received a commission, serving as a platoon leader and later as a company commander. She achieved the rank of senior lieutenant prior to receiving a long-overdue medical discharge in the fall of 1944. Given the degree of her physical impairment, it is a telling commentary on the need for trained manpower that the Red Army retained her on active duty far beyond a point at which she should have been released as an invalid.

The book is also a tribute by the author to "Anka the Machine Gunner" of Russian Civil War fame and to Medvedeva's friend, mentor, and fellow combatant, the machine gunner and hero of the defense of Odessa, Nina Onilova, who was posthumously awarded the Soviet Union's highest decoration for heroism. A prewar factory worker, Onilova was a soldier of impeccable proletarian origins who inspired both female and male soldiers and whose loss deeply affected the author, who swore at her graveside to avenge her death.

The book's translator and editor, Kazmiera Cottam, is a Canadian of Polish birth whose scholarly interests center on Russian females in military service. In her introduction, she points out the recognition accorded both Medvedeva and Onilova by selected senior Soviet military leaders, including Marshal Nikolay A. Krylov. The original 1967 Russian version of *On the Road to Stalingrad* was published by the Ministry of Defense, a clear reflection that the account had been officially vetted and cleared for publication due

to its perceived value as a vehicle for patriotic education.

What do we know about Medvedeva herself? The reticence of the author and a lack of success by the editor and translator in researching the matter yield us no clues as to her family circumstances, prewar employment or education, or even her training upon enlistment. The reader can only speculate that Medvedeva's almost certain obligatory enrollment in the Pioneers or some element of *Osoaviakhim*, the Society for the Promotion of Aviation and Chemical Defense, had provided her basic marksmanship training and rudimentary first-aid instruction. As early as 1935, the *Osoaviakhim* had begun to train women to drill, shoot, and perform simple military tasks. The organization trained over 100,000 military nurses in that year alone.[2] Komsomol, a Communist youth organization, also provided weapons and first-aid training. Medvedeva may thus have had some rudimentary skills at time of her enlistment in July 1941, particularly relating to the provision of battlefield medical care.

The flavor of this period piece of Soviet propaganda emerges soon after the author's embarkation on a troopship at Sochi near the Russian-Georgian border and her subsequent arrival at her assigned unit, a machine gun battalion in the 25th Division, also known as the 25th Chapaev Division, which carried the name of a famous Bolshevik fighter and Civil War division commander. As soon as Medvedeva has reported in, she is reminded of her place as a woman soldier by the senior sergeant. Socialist equality is quickly displayed by politically correct superiors, however, though only after she demonstrates her prowess with a machine gun. The politically incorrect sergeant is then reminded that in wartime there is no place for sexism.

After being hospitalized due to wounds, Medvedeva is promoted to sergeant and rejoins her unit in Sevastopol. While not yet a Komsomol member, she was evidently accepted as a politically reliable soldier, as she speaks of participating in a meeting in a dugout on the front lines. The importance of the commissar, or political officer, is clearly apparent here. Other attendees included company political instructors, Komsomol organizers, agitators from the regiment, and the regimental commissar who functions as the deputy political commander. That regimental worthy delivers a passionate speech about the glorious exploits of the 25th Division's heroic namesake.

The regimental commissar and his subordinates used rare breaks in the otherwise sustained periods of combat to reinforce concepts of duty and self-sacrifice: "And late one evening, all deserving soldiers and officers were singled-out by being given the opportunity to leave the battle zone temporarily, in order to view the film, *Chapaev*. . . . As the projector began to chirr . . . you could sense the soldiers' intense hatred toward the enemy, who had disrupted the lives of all of them." (pp. 30–31) Medvedeva recounts that later in the movie an enemy bullet kills Chapaev, a suitably heroic, party-concocted ending at variance with the reality of his death as a purge victim in 1937. It should be noted that the bulk of the author's account takes place during the period of 16 July 1941 to 9 October 1942 during which Stalin had reimposed the commissar system on the Soviet armed forces.

Not unexpectedly, the widely respected soldier Nina Onilova appears in more than one anecdote, again associated with the inculcation of approved values. Visiting Medvedeva's company, the ever-vigilant Onilova notes that one of the machine gun crews is missing a spare breechblock and other extra parts. Chastising and then exhorting, Onilova promises to return the following day to ensure corrective action is taken. She makes it clear to the chastened crew and to the noncommissioned officer in charge that they must always be fully prepared to join their comrades in killing Nazi soldiers. Onilova returns and determines that the missing parts have been recovered. Medvedeva triumphantly notes that the errant NCO has been shipped off to a rifle company. More likely his destination was a unit of a penal battalion.

Overall, what does this woman soldier's account tell us? Beyond being a story of individual and collective heroism and a series of vignettes that show the degree of Communist Party control at the small unit level, the account illustrates clearly that the Red Army of 1941–42 was a machine characterized by rigid discipline. Patriotism was alive and well, but the focus was on saving the nation, not the Communist regime. Until victory was in sight, political workers in the military emphasized the theme of sacrifice to save the Russian homeland. If the reader will divorce himself or herself from the political overtones of this work, the result will be rewarding. The reader will see small unit combat operations involving male and female personnel conducted effectively and largely without sexist overtones. Medvedeva's account is one of the first to appear in English showing the degree of participation by women military personnel and the heroism they displayed during the Great Patriotic War. The author's distinguished wartime combat record, for which she was decorated on more than one occasion, clearly shows that her service was in the highest traditions of professional soldiering.

Retired Lt. Col. G. Alan Knight served as an Army Medical Service Corps officer. Following his retirement from the Army in 1993, he taught history at the University of Texas at San Antonio and San Antonio College. He assumed his current position as curator at the U.S. Army Medical Department Museum in 1999. The editor of Army History first received a copy of On the Road to Stalingrad *in 2000.*

Notes

1. Alexander Werth, *Russia at War, 1941–1945* (New York, 1964), p.132.
2. Edgar O'Ballance, *The Red Army: A Short History* (New York, 1964), p. 120.

An Army at Dawn
The War in North Africa, 1942–1943, Volume One of "The Liberation Trilogy"
By Rick Atkinson
Henry Holt and Company, 2002, 681 pp., $30

Review by Jeffrey J. Clarke

How the U.S. Army transformed itself during World War II from a small, ill-equipped, and rather pathetic ground force to the victorious juggernaut that it became in the only truly global war ever fought is indeed a tale worth telling. It is to this task that Rick Atkinson, a well-known Washington journalist, military analyst, and author has sought to apply himself. *An Army at Dawn* is the first of three promised installments of that ambitious effort and a worthy addition to his much-acclaimed *The Long Gray Line*, a study of a Vietnam War–era West Point class, and *Crusade*, one of the best histories of the Persian Gulf War.

This initial volume is devoted primarily to the campaigns of the American ground forces in Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia from November 1942 to May 1943. Succeeding works of the trilogy will cover the Italian campaigns and those of Northern Europe respectively, with the focus again being on American ground combat forces. But in fact the story here begins in the United States as the bulk of the American forces scheduled for the TORCH landings assembled in Norfolk, Virginia, after the great strategic debates among the Allies over their initial global counteroffensive finally ended. From the hometown departures of newly mobilized reservists to the turmoil endemic to the rapid military expansion, the author gives the reader a good appreciation of the rough-and-tumble nature of this initial American expedition. Atkinson's description of the Norfolk port of embarkation itself—the beer joints, the confused longshoremen and harbor masters, and the many invasion ships that had seen better days—is alone worth the price of the book.

As Atkinson takes his story forward, he introduces a variety of units and soldiers of all ranks as they enter his epic tale. Throughout, he keeps one eye closely focused on the American combat soldiers—the infantrymen, tankers, and other trigger-pullers—who would have to bear the main burden of what lay ahead and who now steeled themselves to run the Atlantic gauntlet of German U-boats. But equally critical to his narrative are the military leaders of this enterprise. The reader encounters the genial and wise Kent Hewitt, who captained the American invasion fleet, and learns of his odd friendship with the obstreperous George Patton. Above all he observes the shining commander in chief, Dwight Eisenhower, clearly at this point a much more uncertain and naïve general than the supreme commander he would someday become. Almost alone, Atkinson's Eisenhower faces this gigantic effort with great hope and silent misgivings, worried over the rawness of his forces and the unknown qualities and intentions of his many foes.

As *An Army at Dawn* amply documents, the Allied landings in Morocco and Algeria courted disaster. American and British efforts to take the French ports of Oran and Algiers by direct assault failed miserably, with one battalion of the U.S. 6th Infantry incurring casualties that approached 90 percent. Elsewhere landing craft missed their assigned zones up and down the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts, leaving many units hopelessly disorganized for days to follow; other vessels ran aground or capsized in rough surf, their cargos littering the beaches for weeks as Arab scavengers reaped a bonanza. Above all, the elaborate but amateurish Allied efforts to dissuade the French military commanders from opposing the landings were unsuccessful, with most French officers remaining loyal to their Vichy masters in an ultimately humiliating show of ambivalence and misplaced loyalty. In contrast, Atkinson points out, not one Axis soldier died in the initial occupation of French Tunisia that soon followed and set the stage for the real battles of the campaign.

The ultimate triumph of the Allied forces in the west still left them hundreds of miles from their final objectives, Tunisia and the rear of the German and Italian armies fighting in the Libyan desert. Here Atkinson is at his best, using anecdotes, combat reports, and excellent maps to trace the agonizingly slow movement of American and British combat power east into the Tunisian hills and the initial meeting engagements with Axis ground forces. Indeed, the rapid German commitment and the sluggish Allied response seemed to take Eisenhower and his fellow commanders by surprise, while the Tommies and Yanks on the ground were equally taken aback by the ferocity of their new adversaries, especially when compared to the hesitant French. In these harsh initial months, Allied airpower was generally absent or, worse, countereffective while the Luftwaffe was active and aggressive.

The Allied planning conference at Casablanca in January 1943 affords the author a strategic interlude to the fighting in Tunisia, allowing him to change the pace and focus of the narrative a bit while judging Ike's performance mid-campaign. However, the centerpiece of Atkinson's story quickly becomes the fighting at Kasserine Pass waged during the following month. Here the events were more tragic. Nearly fifty years later, the U.S. Army's 1st Armored Division, "Old Ironsides," would join a massive desert drive against a well-equipped enemy force without losing a single tank or armored personnel carrier to hostile fire. Not so in February 1943 when that same unit left 183 burning tanks and hundreds of other vehicles and guns on the battlefield, its elements no match for Erwin Rommel's panzer troops, whose training and experience then gave them decisive tactical advantages. Only a stubborn defense in the more easily

defended hills to the west prevented the opportunistic Afrika Korps commander from turning the Allied flank and causing a more severe setback.

In the final third of the book, the author traces the recovery of Allied fortunes in Tunisia, examining the grinding progress of Montgomery's Eighth Army from the east; the slow British advances on Bizerte and Tunis in the north; and, as more American forces arrived from the TORCH beaches, the advance of the U.S. II Corps under Patton east toward places like El Guettar, Maknassy, and Fondouk. As elsewhere Atkinson's maps and straightforward tactical descriptions make the complex maneuverings understandable, while his treatment of personalities and his anecdotal evidence at the fighting level breathe life into each battle and skirmish. Almost too quickly he closes with the denouement that saw U.S. forces in the north, now under Omar Bradley, participate fully in the final Axis defeat, one which rivaled that of Stalingrad in terms of the men, material, and strategic position the enemy lost forever.

From start to finish Atkinson's main themes are evident. These include the almost continuous conflict between the principal British and American generals over command primacy; their almost paradoxical willingness to put aside past French perfidies and the latter's willingness—even eagerness—to subordinate themselves to Allied military direction after the initial debacle; and the steady winnowing of American commanders that ultimately left the most able leaders in charge at all levels. Atkinson's foremost thesis is that the American forces, from GIs to generals, displayed an ability to learn from their experiences and to begin taking their deadly trade with a seriousness of purpose—even a meanness—that was simply not present at the start. By the end of the campaign, Atkinson's soldiers were thus well on their way to transforming themselves into the superb killers that they would have to become in order to survive on the battlefields of Europe and ultimately to defeat their deadly opponent there.

An Army at Dawn is also a collection of vignettes, anecdotes, and recollections—much of it fresh material—that puts a human face on the American soldier and his often marginal living conditions. Atkinson connects their individual stories to the larger events of the campaign, while giving an equally human aspect to the senior officers who led or attempted to lead them. Related too are the heroism of some, the stoicism of many, and the incompetence of others, along with the absurdities of American manpower policies, the inequities of the sometime profligate American logistical apparatus, and the generally abysmal conditions of war and especially of ground combat. Atkinson also considers the issues of atrocities and troop misconduct, often as part of the general story, and one learns how the vicissitudes of combat and the horrors of war slowly transformed American youth—those that survived—into professional soldiers, while also giving them a hard edge that made them indifferent and sometimes callous to their everyday surroundings. The narrative is accompanied by an extensive bibliography and is heavily annotated with chapter endnotes that are adequate, if not quite the equal of their academic equivalents. Such then is the lively tale that our author tells. Perhaps the best evidence of its readability is the admission that this reviewer devoured its contents over the space of about a week of midnight sessions, ever unable to put down the work until another fifty or more pages had been consumed.

Jeffrey J. Clarke has been the chief historian of the Center of Military History since 1990. He is the author of Advice and Support: The Final Years, 1965–1973 *(CMH, 1988), a volume in the series United States Army in Vietnam, and coauthor of* Riviera to the Rhine *(CMH, 1993), a volume in the series United States Army in World War II.*

Tank Tactics: From Normandy to Lorraine
By Roman Johann Jarymowycz
Lynne Rienner, 2001, 362 pp., $59.95

Review by Steve R. Waddell

In *Tank Tactics: From Normandy to Lorraine,* retired Canadian Forces Lt. Col. Roman Jarymowycz provides an operational critique of the art of war as practiced by American and Canadian tank commanders in France in 1944. He grounds this critique in a review of the earlier evolution of North American armored doctrine.

The first third of the book traces the development of American and Canadian armored doctrine from 1918 to 1944. Jarymowycz details the differing national experiences of the two nations and the impact of the war in Europe from 1939 to 1943 on the development of what he refers to as "North American Panzer Armies."

The middle third of the book examines the use of American and Canadian armored forces in France in the summer of 1944. From the Normandy battles to the Lorraine campaign, he makes extensive use of after-action reports, German and Allied interrogation reports, war diaries, battle performance reviews, and technical evaluations to judge the successes and failures of Allied armored forces. His use of tactical diagrams helps the reader visualize the many tank engagements he describes. Jarymowycz does an excellent job of demonstrating the important links among doctrine, technology, and leadership. He is very critical of the impact that General Omar Bradley's caution and Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery's questionable leadership had on armored operations.

The final third of the book is an interesting mix of material that all relates in one way or another to the author's overall conclusions. In his chapter "Who Killed Tiger?" (the name is taken from the title of a July 1944 report by the 2d New Zealand Division on German tank losses near

Rome) he argues that the lack of a heavy Allied tank was overcome largely because German armor proved mechanically unreliable. The New Zealand report concluded, "Tiger Killed Himself." (p. 278) Overly complex, difficult to maintain, and dependent on a very hardpressed German logistical system, German tank crews and maintenance personnel could not keep their tanks running in the field. The report concluded that the key to defeating German armor was to make them "run." If forced to conduct operational maneuver, the breakdown rate soon crippled German forces.

In his chapter "Stavka in Normandy," Jarymowycz compares the armored doctrine of the Western Allies, Germans, and Soviets. He concludes that each had its strengths: The Western Allies' greatest operation was D-Day, an operation no one else could have successfully undertaken. The Red Army was the master of the strategic offensive. While the Germans could deal with operational battles and limited terrain, they could not handle the strategic offensive with its "big forces, big kills, [and] big gains." (p. 293) By 1944 the Red Army was demonstrating a level of sophistication with massed artillery, operational maneuver groups, offensives against multiple sectors, operational reconnaissance, and combined arms operations that the Germans could not counter. Jarymowycz observes that "an adaptation of the Soviet system may have been the answer to the Allied frustrations in Normandy." (p. 304)

Jarymowycz concludes that the Western Allies suffered from an underappreciation of the value of maneuver warfare and from the negative effects of "Montgomery's 'set piece battle' and interest in Waterlooesque defensive victories." (p. 320) The lack of an American heavy tank and the diversion of resources into tank destroyers also hindered the Allied war effort. Another Allied flaw was doctrinal separatism. The Americans, British, and Canadians each sought their own solution to the problem of breaking out from Normandy. The result was the failure to pool strategic resources or to mass forces at the right place and time to achieve a strategic breakthrough. That led to a series of trials and errors until a breakout was finally achieved.

The value of this work is that it forces one to think. Although Jarymowycz is especially critical of Montgomery, Bradley, and the Western Allied leadership in general, his main argument is that the Western Allies could have done better had they grasped the elements of maneuver warfare earlier. One can't help but wonder whether a book on infantry or artillery tactics using a similar methodology would come to the same conclusions about Montgomery and Bradley. The author ends with a thought-provoking subsection entitled "Cultural Doctrine," in which he argues that cultural traits had more impact on the evolution of armored doctrine than did tactical science. While some may not agree, the impact of cultural differences on the development of the competing armored forces cannot be ignored.

Jarymowycz has produced an excellent work on the tank tactics of the Western Allies in France in 1944. He offers explanations for why the armored forces evolved as they did and why they were used as they were. Anyone attempting to understand American or Canadian armored doctrine in World War II will have to read this work. *Tank Tactics* is well written and includes numerous maps, tables, and illustrations. The work includes extensive chapter endnotes and seven appendixes. *Tank Tactics is* an important addition to the study of World War II armored doctrine and the U.S. and Canadian armored forces.

Dr. Steve R. Waddell is an associate professor of history at the United States Military Academy and the author of U.S. Army Logistics: The Normandy Campaign, 1944 *(Westport, Conn., 1994). He received his doctorate in history from Texas A&M University in 1992.*

Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery, 1887–1976: A Selected Bibliography
Compiled by Colin F. Baxter
Greenwood Press, 1999, 165 pp., $59.95

Review by Harold E. Raugh, Jr.

Field Marshal Viscount Bernard L. Montgomery is arguably the best-known senior British commander of World War II, easily recognized by his trademark black beret and hawk-like visage. Montgomery's outspoken frankness and battlefield leadership remain controversial, and even today assessments of his personality and generalship elicit heated debate.

The purpose of this worthwhile book is "to present and evaluate the extensive body of writing that has grown-up around the controversial Field Marshal." (p. xi) To accomplish this goal, Baxter provides a 129-page "Narrative and Historiographical Survey" before presenting his 413-entry bibliography. The generally comprehensive and balanced narrative places Montgomery's significant achievements during the Second World War and his reputation within the proper historical and historiographical context, to include the ULTRA revelations since the 1970s. Among the frequently controversial issues Baxter discusses in his historiographical survey are "The Montgomery-Auchinleck Controversy," (pp. 37–41) "Patton and the 'Race' to Messina," (pp. 55–56) "Operation *Goodwood*," (pp. 74–76) "Single-thrust versus Broad-front Strategy," (p. 89) and "Operation *Market-Garden*." (pp. 100–106) In his discussion, Baxter puts a number in brackets next to any relevant book or periodical article he mentions. This number refers the reader to the full bibliographical citation of the work, as listed in numerical/ alphabetical order in the second part of the volume. A brief chronology of Montgomery's life is also provided, followed by a listing of primary and other sources for additional research on Montgomery.

National Archives photo

Field Marshal Montgomery, center, confers with Maj. Gen. J. Lawton Collins, left, and Maj. Gen. Matthew Ridgway in Belgium, December 1944.

There is a significant amount of information on Montgomery in this slim volume, as depicted through the eyes of the compiler, the field marshal's many biographers, and other historians who discuss his career. The cauldron of trench warfare on the Western Front during World War I was for Montgomery, as well as for many officers of his generation, a watershed experience that formed his philosophies for decades to come. Interestingly, Montgomery later observed in *A History of Warfare* that "I would name Sir John Monash as the best general on the western front in Europe; he possessed real creative originality, and the war might well have been won sooner, and certainly with fewer casualties, had Haig been relieved of his command and Monash appointed to command the British armies in his place." (p. 24) Biographer Nigel Hamilton, on the other hand, claims that the greatest influence during the Great War on the young and impressionable Montgomery was General Sir Herbert Plumer, the Second Army commander who "had shown that meticulously planned, realistic offensives, supported by enough firepower could succeed." (p. 24)

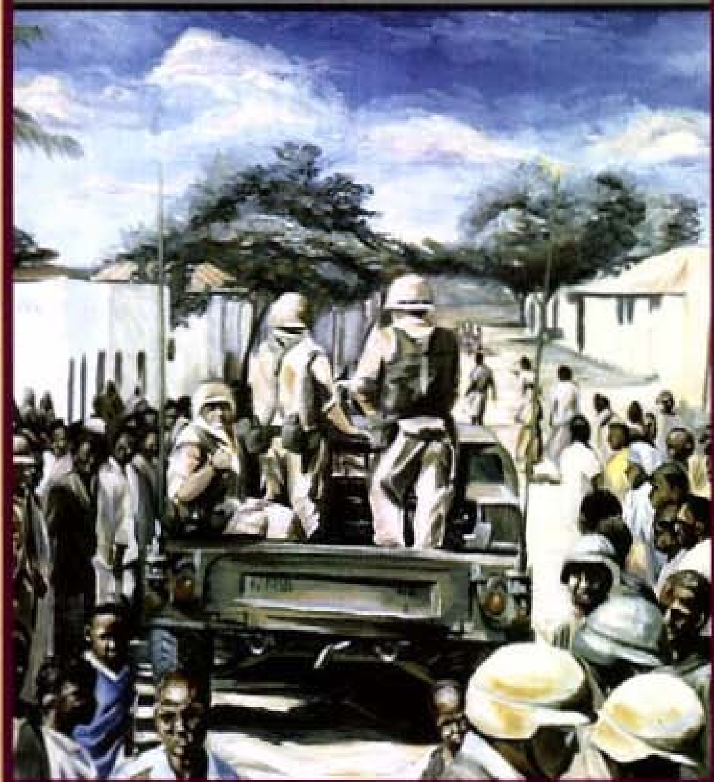
Montgomery became embroiled in controversy almost as soon as he arrived in Cairo on 12 August 1942 to assume command of the Eighth Army. (Montgomery was actually the second choice for the position, receiving the command after Lt. Gen. W. H. E. "Strafer" Gott was killed.) In a gesture that reflected his increasing arrogance, the "white-kneed" Montgomery assumed command of the Eighth Army two days earlier than authorized. He immediately sought to raise morale in what he considered a defeatist unit. In his postwar memoirs, Montgomery claimed that General Sir Claude Auchinleck, Commander in Chief, Middle East, who had assumed command of the Eighth Army in the field, had planned to withdraw from the El Alamein position. The implication was that the newly arrived Montgomery had restored the situation and thus saved the day. After Auchinleck threatened legal action, Montgomery toned down his criticism in later editions of his memoirs. Montgomery biographer Hamilton observed that Montgomery "may well have exaggerated" Auchinleck's pessimism in August 1942, and even Montgomery's brother denounced the accusation as "most unfair and wholly unjustified." (both on p. 39)

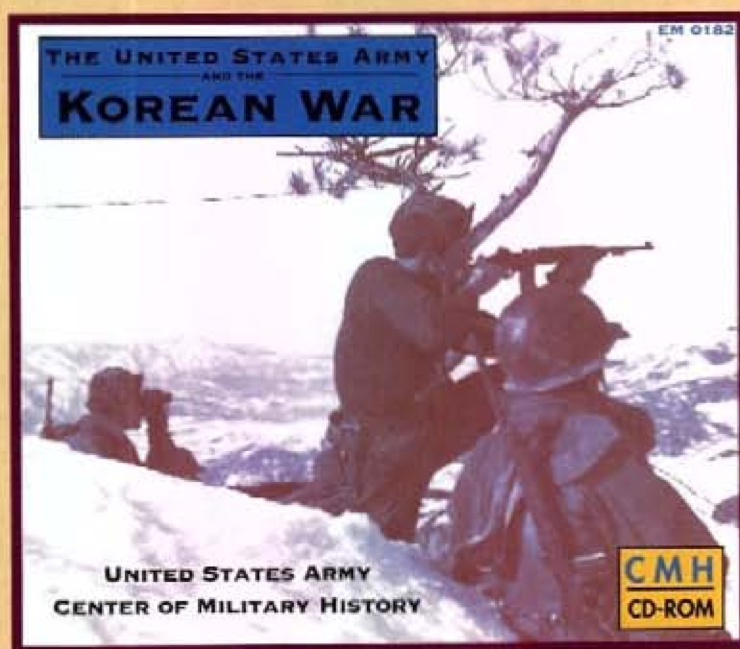
Baxter also gives considerable space to the controversy surrounding the development and execution of post-Normandy strategy in the fall of 1944 and the question of whether a different approach could have won the war by the end of the year. Montgomery proposed a narrow, dagger-like, single thrust—led by himself—via the Ruhr to Berlin, the heart of Hitler's Germany. With a seemingly better knowledge and understanding of the various coalition, national, logistical, and air support considerations involved, Eisenhower decided to advance on a broad front through the Rhineland, a strategy that was more resource intensive but less risky. In assessing this controversial strategy, Montgomery's chief of staff declared unequivocally, "Eisenhower was right." (p. 100)

Greenwood Press has also published two similar books by volume compiler Colin F. Baxter: *The Normandy Campaign, 1944: A Selected Bibliography* (1992) and *The War in North Africa, 1940–1943: A Selected Bibliography* (1996). In the Montgomery study, Baxter, who is a professor of history at East Tennessee State University, generally demonstrates a thorough knowledge of his subject and a lack of bias.

This superb bibliographical study places British Field Marshal Montgomery's accomplishments and reputation within their proper historical and historiographical context, and provides insight not only on controversial issues of his career but, occasionally, on more obscure matters as well. The reader will discern that there are many differences of opinion on Montgomery, with assessments ranging from "a swaggering braggart" and "overrated" to "a half-way competent general" and "brilliant." There should be no disagreement, however, that this volume is an informative and worthwhile reference and research guide for students and scholars interested in Montgomery, his generalship, and the senior leadership of Allied land forces in the Second World War.

Lt. Col. Harold E. Raugh, Jr., U.S. Army, Retired, served in Berlin, South Korea, the Middle East, and Croatia during a twenty-year career as an infantry officer. He also taught history at the U.S. Military Academy and holds a Ph.D. in history from U.C.L.A. Colonel Raugh is the author of Wavell in the Middle East, 1939–1941: A Study in Generalship *(London, 1993).*





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