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Editor's Shelf

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The reappearance of Dwight D. Eisenhower's *Crusade in Europe* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) makes the author's insights available at a modest price to any student or practitioner of the art and science of strategy. Some examples:

. *Coalitions*. Acknowledging the Allied coalition's success despite unfavorable precedents, Eisenhower cites the "near perfection in allied conduct of war operations" as one of the two miracles that led directly to the Nazi surrender. Of unity of command he wrote, "Primarily, the Allied task was to utilize the resources of two great nations with the decisiveness of single authority" and again "it was necessary to produce effective unity out of concessions voluntarily made." (p. 4) Those who accept unity of effort as an alternative may never have faced a crisis severe enough to modify the values and assumptions on which that compromise rests.

. *Training for war*. Eisenhower describes an incident in North Africa in which an officer on his staff refused to approve a maneuver that would have sent part of an armored division on a 700-mile road march (the railroads could not support the move). Eisenhower discovered that the officer's reluctance stemmed from the fact that the maneuver would consume one-half the operational life of the half-tracks in the unit. "The young staff officer was not to blame for this extraordinary attitude. He had been trained . . . in the eternal need for economy . . . [and] had not yet accepted the essential harshness of war; he did not yet understand that the word is synonymous with waste." (p. 119) Skilled infantry, tankers, or pilots can seldom be more effective than those who lead them.

. *An extension of politics*. In March 1945, Churchill rejected Eisenhower's plan for final operations in Germany, wanting Montgomery reinforced to race the Soviets for Berlin. Eisenhower recalls that "He [Churchill] disagreed with the plan and held that, because the campaign was approaching its end, troop maneuvers had acquired a political significance that demanded the intervention of political leaders in the development of broad operational plans." (p. 399) In the event, this political challenge to the authority previously granted him as Supreme Commander was contained and the Allies proceeded with the original military plan. Imagine life at SHAEF Headquarters in spring 1945 had Washington and London been equipped with communications comparable to those available during the 1990-91 Gulf War.

Three other books explore the American experience in World War II. Two of them--one a reprint, the other new--examine the legendary exploits of the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442d Regimental Combat Team. *Go For Broke* by Chester Tanaka is a 1997 reprint of the 1982 original (Presidio Press), while Franz Steidl's *Lost Battalions: Going For Broke in the Vosges, Autumn, 1944*, also from Presidio (1997), describes an incident in which Americans and Germans were trying simultaneously to break through to units encircled by the other. The third book, *US Army Photo Album: Shooting the War in Color, 1941-1945 USA to ETO* (Histoire & Collections, Paris, 1996; distributed by Combined Books) presents in 9-by-12-inch format a collection of World War II color photos taken in the United States and in Europe by a small group of US Army photographers. While the narration acknowledges that many of the scenes were posed, there appears to be sufficient detail in the settings, uniforms, and equipment to satisfy professionals and casual observers alike.

Finally, two collections of essays comparable in design and purpose, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern War* (Oxford University Press, 1997) and *Fins de Siècle: How Centuries End 1400-2000* (Yale University Press, 1996), are profusely illustrated, produced on high quality paper, and relatively inexpensive. The first book, edited by Charles Townshend, examines the experience of war from the period of the Renaissance to the present from two perspectives: the evolution of war and the "elements of modern war." Many illustrations, including 31 color plates, and the associated sidebars effectively supplement the text. While two essays by Martin van Creveld promise a measure of

controversy, the absence of one by John Keegan is worthy of note.

The second book, edited by Asa Briggs and Daniel Snowman, undertakes nothing less than a study of the conditions that have marked the turn of each century since the 14th. Its genesis was a 1994 BBC radio project, some of whose participants expanded their notes into the articles in the book. American readers would do well to have at hand a brief history of England and a concise summary of the royal lines, especially prior to the 19th century. A "Great Books" education would also be a distinct asset. That said, *Fins de Siècle* rewards anyone who will take the time to read carefully and pause often to process its remarkably rich and complex essays.

The editors point out that there was essentially no recorded awareness of the end of the first millennium, an event weighted at the time with "heavy historical, religious, and anthropological freight." The idea of setting apart the final decades of any century is of relatively recent origin; the phrase "fin de siècle" was not used until about 100 years ago. Recurring themes include "a sense of ending [that] seems to have pervaded each of the periods considered in this book," and the emergence of a concept of time marked by the calendar rather than by seasons, religious cycles, or the reigns of monarchs. The evolution from French to English as the language of king and commoner is also followed closely. Recent centuries tend to prompt a summing up--social, political, economic--by historians and by writers for the mass market, as well as an urge to predict conditions for the one to follow.

One must ask whether similar "public landmarks . . . cross-century reverberations [and] clues . . . scattered through distant centuries and not merely through the period immediately preceding our own" could be identified in US history. Perhaps so, if one were to explore the "sense of ending." -- JJM

For details on publishers and prices of books mentioned, call *Parameters* at 717-245-4943 or email: carl_Parameters@conus.army.mil.

Reviewed 22 August 1997. Please send comments or corrections to carl_Parameters@conus.army.mil