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Review Essays

From *Parameters*, Winter 1997-98, pp. 147-74.

Henry G. Gole, "[Reflections on Courage](#)," pp. 147-57.

Frank J. Stech, "[On CD-ROM: 20th-Century Military History](#)," pp. 157-66.

Lawrence G. Kelley, "[The Soviet Soldier in World War II: 'Death Is But Four Steps Away'](#)," pp. 167-74.

Reflections on Courage

HENRY G. GOLE

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Dictionaries, even my Random House two-tonner, fail to get at the essence of courage. They tell us that courage is facing danger, difficulty, or pain without fear. Lord Moran writes in *The Anatomy of Courage*: "The mysterious quality we call courage is will-power, self-sacrifice, call it what you will, that inspires men to hold their ground when every instinct calls upon them to run away." Courage is victory over fear, not the absence of fear. Moran's book grows out of his experience as a medical doctor in World War I with an infantry battalion that took its regular turn in the trenches, "when my feelings as a man were at white heat"; his subsequent reflection employed "the cold scrutiny of an eye trained in measurement, behind which the scientific way of life, with its passion for exactitude, pruned and purged." As both actor and scientific observer, he brings a unique combination of emotion and intellect to his characterization of courage.

He also asserts that:

There is a limit to the number of good men any race can furnish. . . . The morale of all armies broke sooner or later. . . . A few men had the stuff of leadership in them, they were like rafts to which all the rest of humanity clung for support and hope All the fine things in war as in peace are the work of a few men The honor of our race is in the keeping of but a fraction of her people.

This observation hardly surprises, coming from the man who was for 25 years Winston Churchill's personal physician, who also has written of the great prime minister in his finest hours. Social Darwinism, the sun never setting on the British Empire, the thin red line, and the white man's burden--in brief, chauvinism, racism, and elitism--was the stuff of Moran's youth. But observations in the trenches taught him that duty's victory over fear is not the exclusive property of elites. Tommy and Jock, often semi-literate and sometimes larcenous, are also sometimes noble.

Lord Moran opines that courage can be used up. "A man's courage is his capital and he is always spending. . . . I affirm that men wear out in war like clothes." This was a departure from the prevailing notion that veteran troops are reliable and can be trusted, that green troops panic and need to be steadied if they were not to run. We have rediscovered in each war since 1918 that even our best warriors "wear out" and need to relax in a safe place to recuperate.

Only one of Lord Moran's observations collides with experience. He says, "A man of character in peace is a man of courage in war." As much as one prefers to believe that assertion, combat experience suggests otherwise. Some exemplars of virtue collapse under the stress of combat while some unsavory types, not ready for the salon now or ever, demonstrate both masterful military skills and readiness to lay down their lives for their friends. So, brave asocial types also emerge--to puzzle combat leaders and outrage moralists.

Lord Moran's reflections instruct us that measuring courage on a crude scale from coward to hero misses a critical point. Shell shock, battle fatigue, or post traumatic stress disorder--psychic damage whatever the current jargon--can be produced in most of us if sufficiently stressed over enough time. Modern war insures deep and sustained stress; a wounded or exhausted mind can be as debilitating as physical wounds. Every man has a breaking point.

For two brilliant commentaries on these propositions, see Pat Barker's novel *Regeneration* and Jonathan Shay's *Achilles in Vietnam*, the latter an analysis by a psychiatrist that chastises political and military leaders for how much they have forgotten about warriors since Homer wrote *The Iliad*. Barker blends her creative imagination and psychological insights with representations of historical figures of the Great War: Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves, Wilfred Owen, and Dr. W. H. R. Rivers. Her intellectually honest and beautifully crafted novel reveals the ethical dilemma of the physician as he recognizes that he makes sick men healthy to return them to duty and the bedlam of the trenches.

Respect for the Enemy

Admiring courage gives more pleasure to most of us than lamenting its absence. Literature provides spokesmen of "advanced" civilizations saluting qualities in a foe's barbarian warriors. Tacitus, a Roman patrician, wrote admiringly in 98 A.D. of uncorrupted barbarians in a manner suggesting incipient Roman degeneracy:

On the field of battle it is a disgrace to a chief to be surpassed in courage by his followers, and to the followers not to equal the courage of their chief. And to leave a battle alive after their chief has fallen means lifelong infamy and shame. To defend and protect him, and to let him get the credit for their own acts of heroism, are the most solemn obligations of their allegiance. The chiefs fight for victory, the followers for their chief. . . . A German is not so easily prevailed upon to plough the land and wait patiently for harvest as to challenge a foe and earn wounds for his reward. He thinks it tame and spiritless to accumulate slowly by the sweat of his brow what can be got quickly by the loss of a little blood.

More recently Rudyard Kipling captured Tommy admiring Fuzzy-Wuzzy. Reviewing the British experience in fighting "The Paythan an' the Zulu an' Burmese," Tommy concludes that Fuzzy-Wuzzy deserves special tribute for accomplishing with sword and spear (and a big heart and strong legs) what the others--indeed, what Napoleon with the best of European technology--could not: he "bruk" the British square. And further:

E's the on'y thing that doesn't care a damn
For the Regiment o' British Infantee.
So 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Sowdan;
You're a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class fightin' man;
An' 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, with your 'ayrick 'ead of 'air
You big black boundin' beggar--for you bruk a British square.

The Zulus also "bruk a British square" at Isandhlwana on 22 January 1879. More than 2000 Zulus died in overrunning the defenders; only 55 of 950 Europeans survived, and some 550 of the 850 Natal Kaffirs led by European officers died in close combat. The battle is described in detail in *The Washing of the Spears* by Donald R. Morris, as is the subsequent battle of Rorke's Drift. Readers may recall from the beautiful and powerful film *Zulu!* that a relative handful of British troops held off thousands of attacking warriors in that action, which produced an unprecedented 11 Victoria Crosses. In the film, the defeated Zulus salute the British defenders by banging their short spears, the *assegai*, on their shields before withdrawing. Courage abounded among the Zulus and the British at Isandhlwana and Rorke's Drift.

Models of Courage

Certainly in the Western tradition we associate courage with martial courage, particularly with *mano a mano* combat found in the various national epics--*Beowulf*, *The Song of Roland*, *El Cid*--from the biblical account of David defeating Goliath, and perhaps from *The Red Badge of Courage* and books like it that were popular 50 years ago. *Beowulf* takes it upon himself to pursue the bullying monster Grendel through murky depths and to defeat him in his lair. Roland fights a delaying action knowing that he will die to save the withdrawing main body. El Cid leads the

liberation of his country from centuries of foreign domination. One hundred years ago British boys thrilled to George Alfred Henty's books focused on the ideal of manly virtue. Courage in the service of some noble cause gratifies--standing up to the bully, protecting the weak, sacrificing self for the tribe, and each of us has favorites, some widely shared, some idiosyncratic.

The inspiring words of the king on the night before the battle of Agincourt in Shakespeare's *Henry V* enjoy a special place. His "band of brothers" defines the bond among brave men prepared to die for a common cause. It appears most recently as the title of a combat gem, *Band of Brothers*, in which Stephen E. Ambrose captures the essence of an American airborne rifle company in combat, as he had for a British glider company in *Pegasus Bridge: June 6, 1944*, and most recently with *Undaunted Courage*, remarkable accomplishments for this gifted and prolific writer.

Small acts disguise courage. The tender, magical, short classic by Paul Gallico, *The Snow Goose*, depicts the good man quietly and naturally responding to the call of duty. The courage to accept one's destiny emerges from the words of those who already count themselves dead in *The Last Letters from Stalingrad*. In James A. Michener's *The Bridges at Toko-ri*, professionalism and brotherhood demand that the helicopter pilot die for his friend, an event from the war in Korea often--even routinely--reenacted in Vietnam by aviators who would not pull away to save themselves while comrades remained *in extremis* on the ground. David Donovan (a pseudonym) in *Once a Warrior King* reveals an aspect of courage motivated by compassion for the least among us while serving as a soldier-missionary in Vietnam before resuming his preparation for a civilian career. The villagers he protects, the members of his small advisory team, and his reaction to his personal demons as he reenters an ungrateful American society in 1970 ("It was the fashion on college campuses to be outraged about the war, whether one really knew anything about it or not"), find a controlled voice that gets to the places where truth resides.

The hypothesis that courage is a manifestation of love rather than some martial impulse is rudely contradicted by E. B. Sledge in *With the Old Breed*. Sledge describes the murderous hatred for the enemy shared by Japanese and American infantry that "resulted in savage, ferocious fighting with no holds barred" and that caused both sides to decline taking prisoners and to defile corpses. Courage was required simply to lift one's exhausted body from a wet foxhole, to put one foot after the other, to endure one more day in some of the most brutal combat man has ever experienced. Rage, too, produces courage.

The Lonely Sea

Between 1 September 1939 and 8 May 1945, Germany lost 87 percent of its submarines that became operational--753 of 963 (Karl Doenitz, *Memoirs*). The chilling statistic is powerfully amplified by visits to two museums, each a few kilometers from the city of Kiel. One of them, the German navy's war memorial, is at the fingertip of an embracing right arm that reaches into the Baltic and contains Kiel Bay. The memorial contains large panels depicting friendly and enemy losses by year in the longest campaign of the Second World War. A Maltese cross signifies the loss of a German submarine; a red ship's fantail denotes a sunk Allied ship. (In the course of the war German submarines sank a confirmed 2759 merchantmen [14,119,413 tons] and 148 warships.) Two facts leap from the 1943 panel and the next two. First, the Battle of the Atlantic had reached its crescendo, and second, for the last two years of the war going to sea in a German submarine was tantamount to suicide.

On the drive back to the city of Kiel one could easily fail to notice the small sign and the secondary road leading to the modest submarine memorial. Somber stones form the memorial. One enters a room in which there is a visitors' book and emerges on the far side blinking in the daylight within walls creating the feel of a submarine. Left and right are bronze rectangles, each listing ten U-boats. The lower numbers start on the left. At the end of the aisle one turns right returning to the entrance to find the higher numbers of the newer boats of 1944 and 1945. Next to each boat sunk one notes its killer: Canadian corvette, British destroyer, American Liberator. Late in the war one or two of ten--or none--return. Reflection sobers. Imagination chills. Young men in those iron coffins felt the icy waters of the North Atlantic rush into the submerged boat as clanging steel compartment doors literally sealed their fate: death by drowning or suffocation. Of 39,000 men who crewed German submarines, 28,000 perished.

Herbert Werner's first-person account of his 1939-1945 experience in U-boats, *Iron Coffins*, ultimately as skipper of his own boat, should be read with Lothar Guenther Buchheim's novel, *The Boat*. Both succeed in suspending reality as

the reader readily adopts the participant's perspective, joins the hunt, cringes in fear under depth charge and aerial attack, and enjoys some free time ashore between patrols. Buchheim's book is the basis of the excellent film of the same name that showed how cramped, stinking, and terrifying daily life on a German sub was. The austerity of German U-boats compared to American subs in the Second World War is striking, since in the Great War Allied troops admired the German trenches both for their relative comfort and superior fighting positions. See also Buchheim's excellent pictorial history, *U-Boat War*.

Serious scholars will want to compare the Doenitz *Memoirs*, written from the top of the German naval hierarchy, to the Buchheim and Werner accounts to note the degree to which perspective shades interpretation of the same events. For example, Werner regards the provision of constant mid-ocean Allied air cover to convoys by accompanying small aircraft carriers as being the beginning of the end of the German submarine offensive threat in May 1943. Doenitz, when he was informed in 1974 that the British had broken the German "Enigma" cipher and decrypted signal traffic between his headquarters and his U-boats, said, "Well, now you historians will have to start right at the beginning again!" Until then he had credited British radar and sonar for Allied success in hunting down his U-boats, particularly from 1943 until the end of the war. Revision continues.

A new book, Clay Blair's *Hitler's U-Boat War, The Hunters, 1939-1942*, challenges the general acceptance of Winston Churchill's contention that the Battle of the Atlantic was a near-run thing. Churchill said: "The only thing that ever really frightened me during the war was the U-boat peril. . . . The Admiralty, with whom I lived in the closest amity and contact, shared these fears." The distinguished university professor at Temple University and authority on World War II, Russell F. Weigley, credits Blair in this book and in the second, due to be published in 1997, subtitled *The Hunted, 1942-1945*, with demolishing "myths that have been with us for many years." The first volume "explodes the theory that the U-boats ever created a severe crisis for the Allies or a serious likelihood of British defeat."

Submarine warfare in the Pacific lacks the tragic dimension one finds in the Atlantic. Essentially the American submarine offensive gathered momentum against the Japanese after addressing two problems: torpedoes and tactics. The Japanese started the war with torpedoes that worked; they sank ships. US subs deployed thousands of miles, skippers risked all to close with the enemy, and American torpedoes failed to kill targets. The torpedoes improved in the course of the war, but even in 1945 sure kills became misses as torpedoes passed under their targets. (Note that Admiral Doenitz in a memo of 9 February 1942 also remarks on German torpedo failures, specifically noting that they passed under targets six to nine feet too deep, a problem that began in 1936.) American tactics improved as younger officers replaced conservative elders. Essentially the younger men fought on the surface unless in immediate danger.

Three accounts present a clear picture of their war in the Pacific in the Second World War: a novel, a memoir, and a historical evaluation. Since its publication, Edward L. Beach's novel, *Run Silent, Run Deep*, has been the standard against which American submarine books have been measured. The barely disguised memoir begins in the waters of Long Island Sound days before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and ends in September 1945. Beach keeps us reading and soaking up service lore. His pride in his service--and this applies to all the submarine books, German and American--comes shining through. He probably spoke for countless thousands in his reference to "that brave period between 1941 and 1945 when so many of us unwittingly realized our highest purpose in life." This is not the place to debate "The Good War" thesis, but a student of World War II is struck by the almost theological ring of "our highest purpose in life," phrasing that captures the essence of America's messianic mood. Many of those who lived World War II regretted never again sharing that sense of national purpose; for them it would forever be "the war."

A companion piece, and arguably a superior work, is Eugene B. Fluckey's *Thunder Below!* The subtitle tells us what the book is about: *The USS Barb Revolutionizes Submarine Warfare in World War II*. It is a compelling record of the courage, leadership, initiative, and skill of the author and the competence of his admirable crew. In crisp prose, Fluckey takes us through five combat patrols from 28 April 1944 to 7 August 1945, during which he was the Commanding Officer of the USS *Barb*. A 1935 graduate of the United States Naval Academy who retired a Rear Admiral, Fluckey earned the Medal of Honor and four Navy Crosses on those five patrols, honors unequalled by any American warrior. He departed from the methods of older submariners conditioned by peacetime restrictions, particularly their practice of remaining submerged for much of their patrols. His daring was matched by his technical and tactical skills, and his decency is revealed when he says that he is proudest of not losing a single man. Landlubbers will note that the Navy Cross is the equivalent of the Distinguished Service Cross. The man writes almost

as well as he fights.

Before his last patrol, Fluckey gets home to Annapolis and takes the 13 women of the Submarine Wives' Club to the North Severn Officers' Club for dinner and dancing. Five of the women knew they were widows. Fluckey remarks:

I knew four others were widows, but they had not yet been notified. Damn the war! Already over half my submarine school classmates were buried in steel coffins at the bottom of the ocean. The horror those women had yet to face brought tears to my eyes as they danced with their eyes closed, dreaming of dancing with their husbands. I was struck with the thought that I was dancing on skeletons. I bit my lip and listened to their loving babble.

A backdrop to these personal accounts is provided in Clay Blair's *Silent Victory*, a two-volume history whose subtitle states the subject: *The U.S. Submarine War Against Japan*. It is particularly strong in putting the issues that mattered to the warriors, such as the grossly defective US torpedoes and questions of tactics, in the context of strategy. The maps, photos, appendices, and index are useful to general readers and scholars. Finally, to place submarine warfare within the context of America's total maritime effort, see Samuel Eliot Morison's very readable *The Two Ocean War, A Short History of the United States Navy in the Second World War*, a tight summary of a much longer work of interest to scholars, his 15-volume *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*.

Of the many World War II accounts of surface combat at sea, two novels stand out. *The Cruel Sea*, by Nicholas Monsarrat, captures the essence of the convoy system from the perspective of the shepherds, the destroyers and corvettes charged with the responsibility of escorting their flocks through the U-boat wolfpacks in the raging North Atlantic in the first half of the war. *The Ship*, by C. S. Forester, dramatizes an important event--a fleet action in which an outgunned British fleet in the Mediterranean puts itself between an essential Allied convoy and a superior Italian fleet--that unfolds in a single plot within a day. Suspense builds as ship and crew respond as parts of a single body guided by a single mind. The battle reflects great credit upon the Royal Navy of 1940 and reminds the reader of Britain's 400-year debt to the senior service, which had made it possible for the island nation first to maintain its distance from the Continent and later to sustain a worldwide empire. Hard men conditioned to discipline and pride characterized the Royal Navy; readiness to die distinguished it.

Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines

A sample of five books by four authors captures the feel of the war in the sky over Vietnam. The perspectives are those of the helicopter pilot who became the general purpose deliverer of goods, services, firepower, and people, thereby supplanting the famous "deuce-and-a-half"--the two-and-a-half-ton truck--of World War II and Korea; and the forward air controller, FAC, who in his low- and slow-flying bird was the link between the grunt under the dense triple canopy and the driver of the fast mover whose speed made it difficult to see what was happening on the ground, or even to sort out friend from foe. Then there is the pilot of the high-performance, high-speed bird who did two difficult and dangerous jobs: provide close and personal support of infantry in contact in South Vietnam, and conduct long-range strike missions in North Vietnam in an air defense environment that made the missions near-suicidal.

Robert Mason, author of *Chickenhawk*, was a newly minted Warrant Officer and helicopter pilot at 22--ripe maturity among the chopper hot-rodders, some still in their teens. Mason went to Vietnam with the 1st Cavalry Division in 1965, flew over 1000 combat missions, and served as an instructor pilot at Fort Wolters, Texas, before leaving the Army in 1968, in his own words, "a failure." Bad memories became bad dreams and led to too much booze and too many drugs. In 1981 he was charged with smuggling marijuana, sentenced to four years in prison, and released in 1983 on appeal.

Chickenhawk is one of the best books to come out of Vietnam, for at least two reasons. Mason gets to the heart of the matter by showing clearly what it was like to be in the middle of the evolving helicopter tactics and techniques, in which fragile machines put grunts right on their targets and hauled away their broken bodies, often under direct enemy fire. Great risk characterized all aspects of helicopter operations--combat assaults, medical evacuations, gunship support--and Mason did it all. Besides getting the combat story right, Mason serves fellow veterans by honestly reporting his struggle with personal demons that never learned the war was over: "I hope that these recollections of my experiences will encourage other veterans to talk."

Two extraordinary books by US Air Force forward air controllers came out of the war: *Vietnam Above the Trees* by John F. Flanagan, and *A Lonely Kind of War* by Marshall Harrison. Then-Lieutenant Flanagan (he would retire as a brigadier general in the Air Force Reserve) flew the 0-1 Bird Dog (the uninitiated often call it a Piper Cub) in support of the Korean Tiger Division and the American troops of the 1st Cavalry and 101st Airborne Divisions in 1965 and 1966. The highlight of his tour was flying for Project Delta, a Special Forces unit that conducted extremely hazardous reconnaissance missions in Vietnam. Small teams, usually three Americans and three Vietnamese, were inserted into likely areas of enemy activity, meaning that the teams typically found themselves by design in the midst of the enemy and totally reliant upon aviation for insertion, for fixing their location in dense jungle and difficult terrain, for engaging locally superior forces with air or artillery fires, and for extraction--often under hostile fire. Courage is contagious. Flanagan's admiration for the recon men of Delta compelled him to take great risks for men who became his brothers. His personal code allowed no alternative to putting it all on the line; his religious convictions were reinforced by the values of the US Air Force Academy and capped by the example of dedicated Delta men who went all the way every time. Identification with brave soldiers affected his appreciation of his profession, arousing in him a contempt for military bureaucrats who get in the way: rear-echelon commandos, assorted feather merchants unfamiliar with the smell of cordite, and bumbler cluttering up an otherwise perfectly good battlefield. There is a Candide-like discovery of how the world works as he joins Bill Mauldin's Willy and Joe and all combat soldiers who have found themselves unable to communicate with others wearing the same uniform.

Similarly, then-Major Harrison, who served three combat tours in Vietnam, bonded with the hard-core soldiers of the MACV Studies and Observation Group (SOG) who conducted cross-border operations "over the fence" in Cambodia and Laos. He should have known better. "I had been on the intelligence staff at Headquarters, USAF. I came complete with a wife, three children, and a well-mortgaged home in the Virginia suburbs." Despite the appurtenances of middle-class respectability, Harrison was as susceptible as young Flanagan to the magnetism of the brothers in arms. He flew an OV-10 Bronco--an improvement over the Bird Dog, but a light bird vulnerable to ground fire--from a tropical paradise complete "with sagging tents and rain-rotted hootches . . . a strong miasma of burning feces . . . hordes of mosquitoes" and mud that was "on you and in you." But the soldiers "whipped up sharp salutes as if they were doing it because it was their idea, not because they had to." And when he entered the SOG operations center staffed by Special Forces sergeants, "You could almost smell the excess testosterone they generated." He liked the primal accounting so unforgiving in its scorekeeping, so much so that he did dumb things like making an unscheduled landing on a dirt road under fire deep in Cambodia without air cover--not a FAC's job--for a simple reason: he would get the recon men out or die with them. He was hooked.

To understand "the excess testosterone," see also the justifiable paean, *SOG: The Secret Wars of America's Commandos in Vietnam* by John L. Plaster, who served three tours with SOG in Vietnam. Plaster is another fighter-writer capable of creating in the reader the heightened awareness that characterizes intense close combat, falling off mountains, and jumping out of perfectly good aircraft.

Be it known that your scribe loves FACs and the fast-mover jocks they controlled as much as Harrison and Flanagan loved Delta and SOG men. On 5 November 1966 a chubby little grandfather, whose combat flying went back to World War II, put himself in a cone of enemy ground fire, the more effectively to direct fighter bombers on an NVA regiment ill-disposed to me and my American and Montagnard playmates making a single rope river crossing. There is no doubt the FAC risked his life to save ours. He survived, and so did most of us.

Finally to high-performance aircraft--in this case the "Thud," the F-105 Thunderchief--and Jack Broughton, who drove the Thud "Downtown" and has written two books that make America proud of her warriors and writers envious of his skill: *Thud Ridge* and *Going Downtown: The War Against Hanoi and Washington*. Narrative skill, technical knowledge, professionalism, and concern for his men pervade both books. In *Thud Ridge* the fire-breathing, true-believing, lemme-at-'em fighter jock is prepared to go anyplace, anytime, to do anything the American people and their President want done. His narrative takes us with him and his tigers who flew out of Thailand to risk all over North Vietnam. Broughton takes the non-aviator into the cockpit with him to feel the complexity of driving the sophisticated bird, the danger from literally all sides, and the growing frustration of a commander losing friends to enemy fire and to American stupidity. In *Going Downtown* the enemy becomes American political and military leadership rather than the foe in Hanoi.

In his introduction to *Thud Ridge*, Hanson Baldwin says of the men who flew north, "They risked their lives to the enemy, their careers to the politicians." The political decision not to destroy the Haiphong docks and a key bridge over the Red River at Hanoi early on ensured that friendly air and ground forces would have a difficult and dangerous time locating relatively small packets of enemy war materials hidden in difficult terrain or wending their way south through Laos dispersed under triple canopy jungle. Essential war materials--food, fuel oil, trucks, bulk materials, ammunition, weapons, and heavy equipment--could have been destroyed while stacked in the open or in dockside storage. The decision for incrementalism or gradualism led to pilot and aircraft losses as Russia and China provided massive aid and Moscow helped Hanoi "to establish the most sophisticated air defense system ever tested in war." As the United States upped the ante, the foe had already scurried to prepare successfully for the next level of intensity. Brave pilots paid the price with their lives, by being tortured in the Hanoi Hilton, or both.

Colonel Broughton's scathing criticism of political leadership and military bureaucracy might be written off as the usual warrior resentment of all but his band of brothers. Certainly he does not get high marks for political correctness: "The civilian bean counters with the shiny loafers didn't even know where Downtown was . . . Those in control would not listen to those who were doing the fighting . . . His ass really did belong to Uncle, and in this one, Uncle wasn't very concerned about it . . . Gradualism robbed air power of its effectiveness by violating the principles of concentration and surprise. . . . American air losses over North Vietnam were astronomical and unacceptable." And he names names.

The West Point graduate--a veteran of 25 years of dedicated service; former commander of the Thunderbirds, the elite US Air Force demonstration team; graduate of the prep school for generals, the National War College; survivor of 216 combat missions, 102 of them over North Vietnam and the rest over Korea early in that war--is very angry with political authority. But far more painful and intense is his conviction that he and his comrades were betrayed by his beloved Air Force, whose birth he had witnessed. He asserted that has-beens or toadies dictated operational techniques; Air Force leadership failed to tell political leadership that two-bit targets were not worth the risk of multimillion-dollar birds and crews; pilots who had flown desks too long were malassigned to the Thuds, and those lacking the courage to go Downtown were allowed to opt out of combat while keeping their wings; a multitude of headquarters overlapped, and paper-shufflers vastly outnumbered shooters. And loyalty had become a one-way street.

Had "management" displaced "leadership" in the 1950s as the CEOs of Fortune 500 companies replaced Horatio at the bridge as the model of the modern Major General? Had the evangelists of airpower oversold that arm? Did the Strategic Air Command's focus on the Soviet Union leave the US Air Force ill-prepared for the mission in North Vietnam? Didn't the United States fight a limited war against an enemy engaged in total war? Was the United States confused at the policy, strategic, operational, and tactical levels? One hesitates to shrug off Broughton's broadside as warrior rage.

Broughton set out to tell us what it was like to go Downtown, but his operational account spills over to the big picture. Recently released papers of Lyndon Johnson record his doubt about what to do in Vietnam. His most trusted advisor was Robert McNamara, whose published *mea culpa*, after 30 years of silence on the subject, reminds the graybeards among us of McNamara's arrogance in the 1960s as he reveled in humbling the generals and admirals and substituted efficiency for effectiveness. By his own admission, he sent tens of thousands of young Americans--and hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese of all ages--to their deaths for years after he realized that the war could not be won. He lacked the courage to tell his President the truth.

The dead and maimed of the war in Vietnam had no King Henry to say to McNamara what Shakespeare had Henry say to the disgraced Falstaff, who behaved dishonorably in combat (Henry IV, Part II, Act V, Scene V):

I know thee not, old man
. . . I banish thee, on pain of death--
As I have done the rest of my misleaders,--
Not to come near our person by ten mile.

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Review Essay

On CD-ROM: 20th-Century Military History

FRANK J. STECH

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To paraphrase Forrest Gump, multimedia CD-ROMs are like a box of chocolates; you never know what's inside until you bite into one. All multimedia CD-ROMs (Compact Disc, Read-Only Memory) are hybrids: in differing degree they show a family resemblance to books, encyclopedias, documentary films, plays, news broadcasts, museum visits, and computer games. CD-ROMs tell their story with a mix of text, photos, art, video, animation, sound and music, and interactive control.

Some CD-ROMs are "random access," like an encyclopedia or a smorgasbord, to be dipped into to find and explore a particular topic or favorite items. Others are "linear," like a book or a banquet, to be experienced from a defined start through to the finish, with perhaps an occasional diversion along the way. Others are for "grazing" and encourage random, leisurely sampling, browsing, and wandering, like an inviting museum or a street of restaurants in a city. Still others are "interactive," like a video game; they go nowhere until the viewer takes the controls and becomes involved.

Most CD-ROMs are index-friendly, so that searching and cross-referencing are a snap and oceans of text information

can be trawled efficiently. They have to be that accessible; CD-ROMs store over 600MB (megabytes) of data--think of holding all 15 volumes of the *Oxford English Dictionary* in the palm of your hand. Photos, art, sounds, and video are less easily indexed and searched than is text.

The technological tidal wave sweeps this hybrid of multimedia style even further. Many CD-ROMs (although none of those reviewed here) now integrate World Wide Web links to Internet sites that provide related information. A CD-ROM item on strategy, for example, could be only a mouse click away from the Army War College's home page on the Web.

A CD-ROM can be very different from a book, museum, documentary, broadcast, or teleplay, which, as traditional media, are basically linear experiences. CD-ROMs can be multidimensional, non-linear, and deeply layered. Just as a battlefield terrain walk provides the visceral feel of the ground, a CD-ROM--perhaps encompassing interactive visual and audio displays of World War I trench systems--can provide an emotional and intellectual sense of the shape of historical times, places, and events. CD-ROMs offer a multimedia opportunity to understand at several levels, to experience opposing perspectives, to see things against varied backgrounds.

The armchair strategist or military historian can now pursue his or her interests with the aid of multimedia CD-ROMs on a growing list of topics. This essay reviews seven titles dealing with 20th-century warfare. One looks at the great generals. Another addresses World War I. Three treat World War II--one from a worldwide perspective, the others from the perspectives of the Pacific and European theaters. The last two of the CDs cover the D-Day invasion of Europe in 1944. The cost of the CD-ROMs reviewed here ranges from \$10 to \$15 each, remarkably inexpensive considering the sheer volume of material each contains.

. *The Great Generals of the 20th Century*. This and the next three titles, produced by FlagTower Multimedia, provide a standard for other CDs to match. Sold separately or as a set, these four titles offer an outstanding introduction to the potential of multimedia for military subjects. They also provide useful audio and visual historical materials for research. Their lack of full-text indexing and their nonstandard file formats make them less useful for reference. Overall, as aids to making the personal computer a tool for learning and teaching, the series offers extraordinary value for the price.

The greatest strengths of the FlagTower CDs are their well-designed interfaces, outstanding narrative content, and superb production qualities. Each CD--FlagTower calls them "interactive documentaries"--can be viewed as a self-running documentary video, offering graphics, film clips, and first-rate narration to tell the story. The viewer can interrupt the narrative to view text, maps, graphic displays, more images, and video. The CDs all begin with an overview of the interface, introducing and explaining all the controls. The interface controls are highly creative, but standard; once you understand the controls for one disc, the others work exactly the same, but each CD has a unique stylistic theme (*The Great Generals* CD, for example, uses a compass, maps, and medals as icons for the controls).

There are shortcomings: the impressive interface demands careful installation; 8MB of RAM (Random Access Memory) are required, and your video driver may need to be updated. Sources for the history texts are not detailed, and there are few citations. The text cannot be copied (except as a graphic) so extra search capability cannot be added through use of a separate software program that could index the CD's text content. Few photos and videos are captioned, although all audio clips seem to be identified, if not completely sourced. The well-designed user manuals are slightly too large to fit inside the CD "jewel" cases.

The FlagTower production values are superb, comparable to the quality of the *Battlefield* documentary series seen on many Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) television stations. Musical backgrounds and sound effects enhance the drama. Still images are panned and zoomed in video mode, providing outstanding visual appeal (a technique familiar to viewers of Ken Burns' outstanding historical television documentaries). Three-dimensional graphic models of trench defenses or armor tactics are used like interactive museum displays. The pace, timing, and transitions of the narratives reflect the best cinematic techniques.

The narrative content of the FlagTower titles reveals careful and detailed research on each subject and outstanding organization. For example, the generals who are the subjects of this CD are described individually, with a resume,

battle experience, pressures of command, broadcasts, and the general's "public face." Behind each of these topics are deeper layers of information. During the narratives, interactive buttons appear, offering details on the general's biography, technology's effect on warfare and the general's story, battle visuals providing graphic explanations of the general's operations or tactics, personalities important to the general's story, battlefield narrations from a soldier's perspective, and fact sheets covering key events. This outline is followed for 15 generals: for World War I--Haig, Hindenberg, Foch, and Allenby; for World War II--Guderian, Rommel, Montgomery, Zhukov, Eisenhower, Patton, MacArthur, and Slim; for the postwar era--Giap, Sharon, and Schwarzkopf. In addition, four mini-documentaries deal with common themes regarding generalship: the life of a general, behavior in combat, reactions under pressure, and the dealings of generals with the media. Each of these essays is outstanding. All officers would do well to view the essay on generalship and the media, a key, if sometimes unsettling, relationship throughout this century and one likely to be just as vital in the next. Each of four titles in the FlagTower series on *War in the Twentieth Century* includes extensive material on the role of the media.

Taken by themselves, the narratives describing each general seem too brief (uninterrupted, the voice tracks average about ten minutes for each general). To get the full benefit, one must stop the flow with the control buttons and take the interactive excursions. In participating, an impression grows of the significant strategic role each general played, the influences on him, his thinking and sensitivities, and the intricacies of his personality. The details are in the detours, and insights come with these excursions. Of course, one can fault specifics in each general's history. Patton's ivory revolver handles, for example, are mislabeled as pearl. With 15 generals to cover, none of the treatments has the depth of a good biography or memoir. In its way, however, the CD experience is better than simply reading. The viewer who opts to take the excursions controls the depth of his study and can choose to delve into details. The viewer reassembles text, image, and voice, actively participating in reconstructing each general's portrait. It feels like perusing a very good intelligence file while being briefed on an opponent commander. Even as complex a figure as Douglas MacArthur takes shape as the contents of file and brief spread across the screen.

For any course on 20th-century military leadership, this CD is a captivating aid for students, an outstanding tool for instructors. The CD will add enjoyment to the reading of a memoir or biography of these figures. One hopes the military academies give this CD, rather than a marshal's baton, to every cadet to carry in his or her knapsack.

. *World War I*. FlagTower's disc on "the war to end all wars" compares favorably to the recent six-hour PBS documentary on *The Great War*, offering far more details and background material. Like the television series, *World War I* has footage of elderly survivors (one yearns for these old soldiers' names) describing life waist-deep in mud, amidst corpses. With black humor warriors treated skeletons as old friends (as indeed, they were). Siegfried Sassoon's poetic descriptions provide captions for the ghastly scenes from the trenches. The survivors capture our sympathies while the images confirm the horror of this macabre conflict, a nightmare for modern soldiers schooled in mobility and Liddell Hart's indirect approach. Themes covered in the main narratives (each about 25 minutes, if uninterrupted), in addition to the compelling "soldier's life," include an introduction to the conflict, accounts of battles, technologies and tactics, the home fronts, and conclusion. Behind the main narratives are interviews with eminent historians on the five principal belligerent countries. Icons provide paths into a portrait gallery, key personalities, a map room, and "the armory"--data and displays on major weapons.

There are surprising and enlightening details beneath *World War I*'s buttons and icons. How effective, for example, was the first widespread use of battlefield psychological operations? Under these horrific conditions, very. At Caporetto on the Italian Front, German propaganda induced more desertions than the Italians suffered in casualties. Germany, which defines armored warfare in the Second World War, cannot produce a workable tank in the first. How could soldiers living in mud holes withstand weeks of heavy shelling, then gas and tanks? Three-dimensional schematics show how effective elaborate trench killing zones became.

The CD displays the abundant ironies of the war. In 1914 Europe was, despite four decades of stability, ready to explode, as Moltke predicted, "over some *dumbkopfig* business in the Balkans." A dreadnought naval race helps cause a war in which surface fleets play but a minor role, while submarines outweigh battlewagons in the scales of naval strategy. Fears of the offense generate thoughtless, near-instantaneous war declarations, followed by years of defensive stalemate. The depth of hatreds, both personal and continental, among nations whose leaders are blood relatives, still stuns after 80 years. Toward the end, as *World War I* shows dramatically, alienation from the inescapable presence of

death in "No Man's Land" ruined all but the British and American armies. Mutinies in over 50 divisions brought the French army to its knees. Uprisings among the Russian troops fueled Lenin's revolution. Revolt on the home front ended German will to fight on in trenches that were over one hundred miles from Germany's borders at the Armistice. Europe's nations, having committed to murder each other, turned warriors into cynics, fascists, and revolutionaries. Rather than a war to end all war, this war became *causus belli* for the next war, and nearly a war to end all sanity. War's madness is shown memorably in *World War I*.

. *World War II*. The two-disc *World War II* is by far the most ambitious and impressive of the titles reviewed. An introduction and a general account of the war provide two of the five main menu selections. "Theaters of War," another menu, offers accounts of western and eastern Europe; the Atlantic, Pacific, and Mediterranean theaters; and Asia. Other menus deal with themes (such as the Holocaust) and the well-designed index. These main selections can be browsed by topics, or by using a timeline to scan events grouped by a particular period. Supplementary screens appear during these narratives for topics including air, land, and sea weapons; art and propaganda; famous broadcasts; eyewitness accounts; medical problems and advances; profiles of key figures; descriptions of key military units; the role of technological breakthroughs; tactics and strategy; life on the home fronts; and miscellany. Well-known weapons are profiled in a format rather like baseball cards--performance data, photo, and description.

Interesting vignettes are nested among the main narratives; for example, the first specially-built aircraft carrier (Japanese, in 1922), the strides made in plastic surgery for Royal Air Force (RAF) crew injuries; the interwar evolution of a theory of bombing civilians; an interview with Oxford Professor Norman Stone on the origins of the war (Stone's conclusion: a world war was unlikely had Hitler not come to power).

Coverage of the military details of the war is basic but thorough. Operation Barbarossa (the German invasion of Russia) is described in detail, but not the deception operations that preceded it. Electronic warfare came into its own in this war, but is hardly mentioned. On the other hand, Special Operations also came into their own, and *World War II* covers many of the better-known raids: footage of the German glider-borne shaped-charge attack on the Belgian fortress Eben Emael is particularly valuable; Doolittle's raid on Japan is narrated; text panels deal with Bruneval, St. Naizaire, the raid on Rommel, and other classic SpecOps. Like most overview histories, the essential facts are here, but subtleties of real operational significance are sometimes overlooked. That Doolittle's raid tipped Japanese Admiral Yamamoto into the decisive battle of Midway is noted. The unintended consequences of other raids are missed. The airborne raid on Bruneval, for example, netted a German Würzburg radar set for the British Boffins to examine. The real victory was less obvious: the Germans reacted by doubling or tripling the barbed wire around all coastal radar sites, which British photo-interpreters immediately noted and added to the order of battle.

The basic framework of *World War II* is historical: what happened, why, and how, with what results. The CD smoothly integrates accounts of conflict that encompassed three-quarters of the earth. The narratives provide over ten hours of broad analysis, as well as details of the war's geopolitical and military dynamics. *World War II* would serve well on the syllabus for an undergraduate modern history course. The documentaries are as encompassing and dramatically produced as those of *Battlefield* or *Victory at Sea*. FlagTower's outstanding multimedia production does justice to the defining event of the century.

. *War in the Pacific*. This FlagTower disc provides more details on the Pacific theater than the overview provided in *World War II*. The main sections of *War in the Pacific* cover the inevitability of war, the conflict itself, technology of war, the media war, and reflections on war. Fact sheets provide maps, data on media figures and productions, equipment specifications, personnel, and miscellaneous dispatches.

The Japanese decision to initiate war and the US decision to use the atomic bomb to end it are described in documentary supplements to the section on "the conflict." Another supplement addresses the setting of strategic priorities and the Allies' decision to put "Europe First." Other sections address the victories of Japan and the United States.

New weapon technologies were essential to operating over the great distances of the Pacific, a story told in the "technology of war" section. Separate documentaries deal with the air war, carriers, amphibious forces, submarines,

codebreaking, and the development of the atomic bomb through the Manhattan Project.

The "media war" section provides a detailed and engaging comparison of American and Japanese cinema treatments of the Pacific war, as both entertainment and propaganda. Separate documentaries explore US and Japanese censorship and the wartime cinema in both countries. Film excerpts underline the importance of using graphic, emotional media to support a total war. Film representing Doolittle's raid, for example, was used to portray the heinous Japanese treatment of the downed flyers. Japanese war film footage, rarely shown in postwar Japan, provides interesting insights into Tokyo's efforts to sustain mass support in the face of mounting evidence of imminent defeat. Westerners (and Japanese who emulated them) were shown as morally and spiritually corrupt--shades of propaganda from today's fundamentalist states.

. *World War II Encyclopedia--The European Theater*. As it provides a British view of World War II, this CD from Softkey International reflects the large role played by the Imperial War Museum (IWM) in its production. The CD reminded me of the multimedia displays in the IWM itself, and the CD experience is a little like a tour of the IWM collections and archives. While subtitled *European Theater*, the CD's graphic materials also cover British operations in the Pacific, Africa, and Mideast.

The CD's best features are its interactive multimedia timeline and the reproductions of the IWM's war art. One uses the timeline by sliding or clicking on a year scale to display events on a particular date in text, photos, videos, and historical audio clips (mostly BBC broadcasts) that explain the unfolding events of the war in Europe. The material has a decidedly British point of view; the war in Russia, for example, rates hardly a mention. Like the displays in the IWM itself, the material emphasizes how the war came about, including strategy in the broadest geopolitical sense, and how the war affected the average Briton on the home front as well as the battlefield. This "Briton's eye view" of the war is the CD's strongest perspective, and also one of its major shortcomings. There are five items on Rommel (whom the average Briton views as something of a demi-hero), but nothing on Guderian or Kesselring, far more significant military figures. In the middle of the treatment of the Western Desert one finds a photo and caption of the Home Guard, to reinforce the human perspective. The CD's presentations lack historical depth, but are strong on the human look of war. Treatments of military tactics and operational art are virtually absent.

The CD's integration of materials is outstanding. For example, the text describing British reaction to Pearl Harbor is accompanied by a Churchill broadcast and a photo of the PM (in his Royal Navy uniform) with Roosevelt. Stacked behind the display are more texts, audios, videos, and photos (indicated by icons) with detailed captions. The timeline display provides pointers to additional screens on subjects from that date. Simply following the timeline provides an engaging multimedia documentary of the war crafted entirely out of contemporaneous materials, rather like following the war in the daily papers and on the wireless. One can also use a detailed index to find other materials.

The text and graphic captions are searchable via key words. Authors and historical sources are not indicated, although archive codes suggest the materials are from IWM collections. Texts and captions are sometimes puzzlingly brief, confusing, or flat wrong. For example, captions describe, without explanation, the "German liberation [sic] of Poland," the "defeat [sic] of the Russians at Stalingrad," and "the [German] liberation [sic] of the territories." Brevity afflicts other items. Dennis Babbage describes the German Enigma coding machine operation, for example, but without diagrams or images the audio narrative is incomprehensible. There are only four maps, from German war diaries. This CD does not attempt to provide the military "big picture," but it excels in presenting the artist's view of war. The IWM collection of military art is outstanding, with reproductions of more than 300 paintings, drawings, and posters. One painting alone was worth the price of the CD: Keith Henderson's *Air Gunner in Turret*, a stunning and haunting graphic, magnificently evocative of RAF night combat.

The more than 800 photos include an extensive collection of propaganda materials from both sides and extremely high-quality photos of the war leaders. All the art and photos can be displayed full-screen with a mouse click, and their resolution is excellent. The lack of photos of military equipment, however, was disappointing. There seems to be almost an aversion to photos and diagrams of the war materials that are the IWM's most conspicuous holdings. The IWM's collections are outstanding (its air museums are unique) but there are precious few photos of any of this on the CD.

This CD provides only fragments of these fabulous collections and displays, a disappointingly abbreviated memento. But the CD is far less expensive than a trip to Great Britain to visit the museums, and it offers a variety of uniquely enlightening materials and perspectives.

. *The Simon & Schuster D-Day Encyclopedia*. The first of two D-Day CD-ROMs reviewed, the *D-Day Encyclopedia* blends well-written texts by world-class historians, engaging video clips of notable participants reminiscing, audio oral history clips, and splendid archival photos. The *D-Day Encyclopedia* is good enough to be an instruction aid for college students or junior officer instruction. Very much a quality production, the CD-ROM is worthy of its title "encyclopedia."

This CD's strongest feature is outstanding historical scholarship, reflected in the first instance in the credentials of its two editors: David G. Chandler and Brigadier General James Lawton Collins, Jr. Chandler, head of War Studies at Sandhurst, is president emeritus of the British Commission for Military History and the author of volumes on World War II and the Napoleonic Wars. General Collins landed on Utah Beach, commanding the 957th Field Artillery Battalion. He also served in Korea and Vietnam, and he headed the Defense Language Institute. A former Army Chief of Military History, he authored studies of the Vietnam War and edited *The History of World War II*.

The CD's histories and biographies were provided by 142 of the most notable historians of World War II; both the Allied and Axis sides are well represented. A sample of these world-class authors, less citations of their many well-known works, includes: Stephen E. Ambrose; Stephen Badsey, senior lecturer at Sandhurst; Martin Blumenson, historian at the Naval War College, the Citadel, and the Army War College; Alfred Price, RAF officer, Fellow of the Royal Historical Society; Jürgen Rohwer, formerly a Kapitän in the Kriegsmarine, and Earl F. Ziemke, professor at the University of Georgia. The variety and quality of the *D-Day Encyclopedia's* writers add balance and objectivity to controversial subjects. For example, John Terraine's account of Normandy close-air support reflects the influence of British Field Marshal Montgomery, whose principles of air-ground coordination deserve a salute by American soldiers and airmen. The Field Marshal, never popular with Americans during the war, fully anticipated what we today call Air-Land Battle doctrine.

One expects a D-Day history to provide quality accounts of the amphibious, airborne, and ground operations, and they are here. But one can also find real depth on less obvious topics--for example, detailed biographies of hundreds of World War II leaders, or how strategic air power contributed throughout the buildup to the Normandy operations. The biography, for example, of Brigadier General Frederick L. Anderson, US Army Air Force (the original for the Gregory Peck figure in the film *Twelve O'Clock High*) reflects the air leadership shifting from strategic to operational tactics as Eisenhower orders the softening up of the invasion targets. There are full explanations of Operation Pointblank, the Oil Plan, the Transportation Plan, and other dynamics of the strategic air campaign. The writing throughout is excellent; each item identifies its author and sources.

Words, as military historians know well, are keys to strategy. The histories on this CD capture the nuances. For example, the USAAF's bombing strategy turned on one general's single phrase. Air Marshal Arthur "Bomber" Harris, head of Bomber Command, had persuaded Winston Churchill to ask Franklin Roosevelt at the Casablanca Conference to order the Eighth US Air Force to join the RAF in night operations and stop their costly daylight bombing. The Eighth's commander, Major General Ira Eaker, summoned to make the USAAF rebuttal, stressed "round-the-clock" bombing. Churchill, captivated by Eaker's phrase, withdrew his opposition to the Americans' daylight bombing. Eaker's Americans continued to fly days; Harris's RAF, the nights.

The same high quality applies to the video clips of D-Day participants recounting their memories of the campaign. Colonel Hans von Luck, then commander of the 125th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, 21st Panzer Division, recalls the German side of the beaches. Major Kenneth Macksey, Normandy commander of the 141st Tank Regiment (The Buffs), provides the British tank turret view. The oral history audio clips provided by Sir Harry Hinsley, World War II codebreaker at Bletchley Park, are particularly informative on the key role of the ULTRA code-breaking in defeating Hitler's forces. Even the "little bits" are right on the CD. For example, the film clip of Hitler after the fall of France, frequently shown in the version doctored by British propagandists to make Hitler appear to be dancing a gleeful jig, is here in the original.

The 300-plus photos, 40 videos, and animated map graphics themselves do more than illustrate. Combined with outstanding texts and captions, they teach dramatically. The locations of each Allied D-Day paratroop stick are shown on detailed maps with narrative descriptions. Aerial reconnaissance photos of a tank depot in France before and after a 1944 Bomber Command night strike vividly demonstrate what 1500 tons of high-explosive and incendiary bombs do when they land in an industrial park. The caption of a "before and after" photo pair of a rail yard bombing asks us (underlining the altogether obvious) to "note the destruction of workshops, repair depots, signaling apparatus, roundhouses, and rolling stock." An animated map shows the rail depots damaged and destroyed in northern France. Armchair photo interpreters can use computer graphics programs to manipulate and examine such remarkable photos. Gun camera films of the Normandy transportation interdiction campaign before the invasion punctuate with exploding munitions trains the operational paralysis wrought by tactical airpower on German movement and logistics. Film and photos of the German V-weapons underscore the CD's text accounts of strategic bombing that held Hitler's rocket developments at bay just long enough to prevent the V-1s and V-2s from disrupting the Allied invasion forces.

The CD-ROM's interface is extremely simple: a tool bar with buttons for articles, timeline, maps, and media tour. The articles are fully indexed, with extensive subtopics. Single-clicking on the colored text within an article activates a pop-up window with an explanation of the term. Maps have "hot buttons" to take the viewer to other screens on units, commanders, and operations. The timeline is a series of 34 interactive screens based on the Overlord Embroidery Tapestry, offering a graphic depiction of the people, places, and events that comprised the invasion. File formats (with the exception of text) use standard file types; common computer applications can easily use the audios, videos, and graphics. Problems with the CD-ROM are few. The window is too small for the excellent photo captions, and its size is not adjustable. One scrolls too much as a result. The "media tour" is just a slide show of random images and videos rather than an organized tour of topics. But these are nits. This is the CD to buy to experience D-Day on the computer.

. *June 6, '44: Operation Overlord*. This Paradise Software product is the least well-engineered CD of those reviewed here. A novice could not understand D-Day if this were his or her only source of information. The CD was apparently assembled hastily as a product for the 50th anniversary of D-Day, with too little time to integrate smoothly the text, maps, photos, audio, and video. For example, the portraits of significant admirals and generals have several photos missing, with only a banner showing their name, rather than their photo. There is little, if any, original historical material. Those who have studied D-day in any depth will find little here that is surprising or unfamiliar. The videos, for example, are vintage newsreel material with the contemporary home-front propaganda voice-overs. Sources for film, text, and photos are not provided, and the scholarship in general is shoddy. The perspective is entirely that of the invaders. German viewpoints are almost entirely absent.

The most apparent shortcoming of the CD's presentation is its interface: a map of the Normandy area that changes through the hours of the invasion, controlled by a clock hand. Buttons for photos, text, radio broadcasts, and newsreel footage are dragged over the map. At a location there may be, for example, a photo. But nothing is marked, so the interface is difficult and frustrating, with no indications of where to click on the map, nor any indications of what may pop up. The CD requires many mouse clicks for anything to happen, and as hard as it is to find and display items, it is then equally difficult to stop functions once they are started. There are no controls for pausing or reversing videos or audios. There is no index. Most photos have no captions. You get the point.

On the positive side, it is simple to reverse-engineer this CD. That is, all the files are readily available in well-labeled directories and the file formats are standard. There are about 150 text files (in the .txt format), so you can easily index the material. The 180 photos, 45 satellite images, and the few dozen maps (all in the .bmp format) are viewable in any of many common graphics programs. Forty video files (.avi format) and 50 audio files (.wav format) are compatible with all the standard multimedia programs. Standard Windows applications permit much easier browsing of the files than the CD interface itself provides. Thought of only as a boxful of historical files, to be opened and sampled, the CD's files repay its price.

Finally, the CD's satellite photos of the Normandy beaches and peninsula offer a new perspective on the invasion site. But with low resolution, no zoom capability, and poor map correlation, the satellite photos are rather like flying over the French countryside on a clear, sunny day at 10,000 feet, a field marshal's reconnaissance. The small green checkerboard squares of the French bocage hedgerows are readily apparent at that altitude. Little military imagination is needed to see why they were so hard to attack, so easy to defend. The deep blue estuaries of the beautiful French

rivers snake down through the lush green to the Channel, favoring the invader with routes of advance, but slowing him with soggy marches. And one can contemplate, from the great distance of space and time, the wide sandy stretches of beach, labeled so simply on D-Day, so serene today, so marked forever in blood that singular day.

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Review Essay

The Soviet Soldier in World War II: "Death Is But Four Steps Away"

LAWRENCE G. KELLEY

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"Marshal Georgiy Zhukov . . . [was] perhaps Russia's greatest World War II soldier [M]ore than any other one man [he] was responsible for the formulation and implementation of Soviet strategy." -- Hanson W. Baldwin, *Battles Won and Lost*

"The war on the Eastern Front was won by the bravery and resiliency of the common Soviet soldier fighting for reasons that beggar logic, by the USSR's enormous natural resources, and assistance from Western Allies, and not by Stalin and his Generals." -- Michael Parrish, *The Lesser Terror*

"The Red Army suffered 29,629,205 casualties from 22 June 1941 [to] 9 May 1945, of which 11,285,057 (38.1 percent) were irrevocable and 18,344,148 (61.9 percent) medical." -- General-Colonel G. F. Krivosheyev, *The Secret Caveat is Lifted* . . .

"Zhukov was the butcher of the Russian peasantry." -- Viktor Astaf'ev, Russian writer and *frontovik*

Who best captures wartime truth--soldiers, correspondents, historians, sociologists, analysts, statisticians, photographers, writers? The point is moot; they all convey their message, some more graphically, others more clinically. Scholars search nobly for "objective truth," but to bloodied combat veterans whose vivid memories and scarred wounds make sleep elusive, subjective reality is no less valid. The glasnost literature, collapse of censorship, and anarchy of the post-Soviet years have produced a wealth of revelations about The Great Patriotic War, on which the widely cited Krivosheyev volume provides some of the most extensive Soviet loss data available. Yet despite the Russian General Staff's mathematical precision, the impact of its quantifiable truth pales against the "truth from the trenches" expressed by the unwitting subjects of its research. When asked the thorny question of how Red Army won the war, the Russian writer-*frontovik* Yuriy Nagibin, once wounded in action, replied pointedly, "With flesh." In Munich, half a world away, an exhibition of Wehrmacht photographs from former Soviet and Yugoslav archives reveals the matter-of-fact brutality of the Eastern Front more glaringly than volumes of statistically based political dissection, prompting more heated controversy over *Vernichtungskrieg im Osten*--the war of annihilation in the East--than has occurred in Germany in years. And a series of exceptional documentaries done by the German television network ZDF with its Russian counterpart brings historical reality home to the former adversaries, whose picture of World War II has long suffered from pained silence and omissions, in the one case, and continuous politically motivated revision, in the other. This essay examines a few of the disparate attempts to ferret out the experience of that time.

In *Stalin's Reluctant Soldiers*, Roger R. Reese, a historian at Texas A&M, analyzes the social history of the prewar Red Army in search of an explanation for the cataclysmic defeats suffered in its first year of combat. His conclusion: "The single most important factor in the defeat of the Red Army in 1941 was . . . rapid expansion in the thirties, [which] increased in magnitude the internal social and organizational problems while . . . reducing the leadership's ability to deal with them." By articulating this unorthodox position he parts company with conventional wisdom, powerful works of the glasnost era (e.g., Dmitriy Volkogonov's *Triumph and Tragedy*), and the views of our next author, all of which lay the blame for Soviet disasters squarely at Stalin's feet.

Reese believes that writers have neglected the negative aspects of collectivization, industrialization, and expansion on the prewar development of the Red Army. His contention can be debated, but he handles all three areas perceptively: Collectivization massively alienated the countryside (the major source of military manpower), industrialization created modern technologies for a society not yet able to exploit them fully, and military expansion on the scale undertaken proved dysfunctional. He argues that inordinate expansion, partly predicated on an inaccurate estimate of Wehrmacht strength deployable against the USSR (double the actual figure), led to insuperable problems in the troop units, where officer procurement and retention, training, and standards represented weaknesses. Absent a professional NCO corps, inadequate numbers of undereducated, unmotivated, poorly disciplined, and inexperienced junior officers could not properly train the masses of unwilling, disgruntled, mostly peasant conscripts mobilized to flesh out undermanned Soviet units. To make matters worse, the Purges and wholesale creation of new units led to the promotion of many officers to positions beyond their ability. As hostilities threatened, discipline broke down massively, resulting in desertion, mutiny, crime, and death threats aimed at unit commanders. It was a prescription for failure.

The merit of Reese's well-written work lies in his analysis of expansion, but he overstates the case. Many, including this reviewer, question his contention that the Purges had less effect on the Red Army's collapse in 1941 than structural expansion. While acknowledging the Purges' effects, Reese argues that, with or without terror, they accounted for only one third of the 95,000-man officer shortage in 1938, and that new figures indicate 30 percent of those arrested were actually reinstated before the outbreak of war. It is expansion, he believes, that principally explains Volkogonov's oft-quoted assertion that in 1941, 75 percent of Red Army officers had held their positions for less than a year. Officer levels, he reasons, already low in 1938, could not match the 1.5-million-man growth that occurred over the next three years.

As perceptive as his insights are, Reese appears to undervalue the experience factor. Whatever the data, not all officers are equal. Senior commanders exert disproportionate influence on operational art and the outcome of large-scale conventional combat, and they were the ones overwhelming victimized by the Purges (87 percent of all general officer equivalents, 80 percent of top commanders, and 50 percent of senior commanders were removed or arrested from 1935 to 1939). Officer turbulence during that period, dramatic everywhere, increased twice as fast at or above division level

as at battalion level. By 1941 Soviet division commanders averaged only 16 years of service, and mechanized corps commanders, at 41 years of age, were 12 years younger and less experienced than their German counterparts commanding smaller units. Only 1.4 percent of the force was over 45 years old; without the Purge, this trend would certainly have been much less severe. Additionally, at the highest levels Stalin's idiosyncrasies led the Purge to claim the gifted (Tukhachevsky, Egorov, Blyukher) while sparing the mediocre (Voroshilov, Budenny). At its heart the tension here reflects the age-old clash between the relative significance of numbers and individuals, some of whom we dare to call great. It is one which data alone will not likely resolve.

In *The Lesser Terror*, Michael Parrish, many of whose figures I cite above, incisively continues the epic work initiated by Robert Conquest (*The Great Terror, Inside Stalin's Secret Police*) in documenting Stalin's internal repression and the machinations of competing elements within his ruthless, if obeisant, security apparatus. Parrish, a historian at Indiana University, minces no words in condemning the Soviet internal security estate. Using exhaustive references, statistics, and analysis he demonstrates that terror, "the hallmark of Stalin's rule," did not cease with Ezhov's removal in late 1938 but continued unabated, in phases and under various directors, until Stalin's death in 1953. This point has long remained underrecognized. During the war the military judiciary, NKVD, NKGB, and SMERSH routinely executed loyal officers for losing battles, dispatched their wives and relatives into the gulag, preemptively shot prisoners in areas threatened by the advancing Wehrmacht, deported or demobilized from the Red Army entire ethnic groups deemed vulnerable to German subversion (e.g., the Chechens), ran the despised blocking detachments and penal battalions, and of course operated the camps. Along with the political officers, these organizations contributed mightily to the demoralization of the Army, where pervasive surveillance was the norm and failure often led to execution. In the war's darkest hours, when the very existence of the USSR hung in the balance, they arrested two million personnel as spies--enough to fill 250 divisions; the mind boggles at the self-destructive nature of their activity. In the postwar years they served as Stalin's henchmen in his multiple, paranoid, principally anti-Semitic and antimilitary crusades. But ultimately, the Chekists helped devour their own.

The hard-hitting detail which Parrish marshals is most impressive, if at times tedious. His coverage of three 1940-41 massacres--in "Katyn," Orel, and Kuibyshev--shows the bureaucratic efficiency and cold-blooded amorality with which Soviet security organs functioned. Katyn, a series of actions in which Stalin liquidated 14,500 Polish officers and 11,000 others in territory newly "liberated" under the secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, reflected perfidy at its finest: mass summary execution of potential enemies by Politburo decree using German weapons, blamed on the Wehrmacht by Stalin in 1943 after discovery of the graves, politically exploited, and officially denied by successive Soviet leaders until 1990. Orel and Kuibyshev represent less known but no less arbitrary instances of bloodletting directed against political prisoners (many of them exiled foreign communists) and senior Red Army officers (including two former air force commanders-in-chief, a former PVO commander, and four Heroes of the Soviet Union), respectively. Parrish's acidic insights provide perspective: Despite the scale of the killing, Katyn's victims amounted to small fish in Stalin's Russia, where a million had already been executed *legally*. Its organizers later formed the core of the Soviet commission on the Nuremberg Trial, advising the Allied court. "What was extraordinary about the Commission," Parrish observes, "was the fact that most members, as well as one of the Soviet judges . . . were as guilty as those about to be tried."

The Lesser Terror has several principal actors: L. P. Beria, the dissolute but practical head of the NKVD/MVD from 1938 to 1945; V. S. Abakumov, the chief of SMERSH/MGB from 1943 to 1951 and Zhukov's sworn enemy; V. N. Merkulov, chief of the NKGB/MGB from 1943 to 1946; V. V. Ul'rikh, "Stalin's hanging judge and world record holder in number of people sentenced to death"; V. M. Blokhin, "possibly the greatest executioner in history"; and Stalin himself, who manipulated, intimidated, and controlled them all. To Parrish, Stalin played the ultimate Mafioso, calling all the main shots, while his entourage represented nothing more than "a group of spineless courtiers vying for favors and jockeying for power under a capricious and omnipotent master who never let them forget who the chief capo was."

Parrish, an expert on World War II, describes Beria and the security services' unique significance to the war effort. By presiding over the gulag, Beria ran the country's largest, if least efficient, industrial enterprise. Using slave labor he helped solve such major logistical problems as ammunition production and, later, creation of the bomb. He organized special camps of world-class scientific prisoners (e.g., the "Tupolev sharaga") to design state-of-the-art defense equipment, an institution which Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (himself an artillery captain arrested by SMERSH on the East Prussian front in 1945 for derision of Stalin) fictionally immortalized in *The First Circle*. As Parrish points out, during

the first week of the war Stalin met more often with Beria than anyone else, indicating both his stature and Stalin's security obsession. Beria also prepared the reception for repatriated Soviet POWs, whom Stalin considered unmitigated traitors despite their courage and suffering; many ultimately spent more time in his camps than in Hitler's. In recognition of his importance Beria was made a member of the State Defense Committee in 1941, a Marshal of the Soviet Union in 1945, and the first Chekist full member of the Politburo in 1946.

Parrish views Soviet military art dimly: "The performance of the Red Army during the war was marked by incompetence, total disregard of losses, and the universal primacy of political over military considerations." (Here he partly disagrees with David M. Glantz and Jonathan M. House, who argue in their excellent 1995 book, *When Titans Clashed*, that the Red Army experienced a renaissance in maneuver warfare starting in 1943. An exchange among them would be welcome.) Stalin and the Soviet High Command did readily accept suffering and casualties among their subordinates, often mounting frontal assaults against an entrenched, combat-savvy enemy. After four years of such tactics Red Army losses exceeded twice those of the Wehrmacht, precipitating a manpower crisis; during the assault on Berlin the 2d Guards Tank Army actually ran out of infantry. Given this stark reality, it should not be surprising that the immediate obsession of Red Army troops found its most poignant expression in lyrics. In *The Revetment*, Aleksey Surkov, a prominent cheerleader for the Revolution but one capable of artistry despite Socialist Realism, captured the soldier's sullen trepidation in what many Russians consider the most evocative line of the war years: "Death is but four steps away." Krivosheyev reports dryly that 11,285,057 made the trip.

The man who, more than any other, deserves responsibility for their journey--as well as credit for the Red Army's triumphal march to Berlin--has his image updated in the revision of *Zhukov* by the late Colonel Otto P. Chaney, Ph.D., formerly a faculty member of the US Army War College. The only four-time Hero of the Soviet Union for military accomplishments (Brezhnev awarded himself this honor for political ones) and first recipient of the Order of Victory, G. K. Zhukov personifies leadership, valor, proficiency, grit, and integrity to Russians at home and abroad. Most lionize him. Who else had the skill to rout the Wehrmacht generals, the fortitude to countermand Abakumov and throw him out of Germany, or the daring to arrest Beria? Marshal A. M. Vasilevskiy, Zhukov's friend and wartime partner, wrote: "In the constellation of Soviet generals who so conclusively defeated the armies of Nazi Germany, he was the most brilliant of all." In Chaney's formulation, "For Russians and people everywhere he remains an enduring symbol of victory on the battlefield." At a time when most Soviet heroes suffered unceremonious debunking, Zhukov remained a winner--the embodiment of the uncompromising, ironhanded success that Russians so admire in their leaders.

As a member of Stavka and Stalin's Deputy Defense Commissar from the outset, Zhukov served not only as the chief architect of Red Army strategy, but as the Great Leader's principal firefighter as well. Wherever military disaster threatened, and that was everywhere in the first year of the war, Zhukov was dispatched to shore up the situation. He did so mercilessly as one of 30 Stavka representatives ensuring that local commanders precisely carried out directives (often under pain of death), and subsequently as commander of a strategic direction and of a *front*. From Leningrad to Stalingrad, Ukraine to Poland, and ultimately to Berlin, he crafted or implemented the plans that led to victory. But Zhukov also had a darker side, which Chaney's admiring biography downplays: the introduction of penal battalions and blocking detachments, declaration of surrender or unauthorized retreat to be treason, cooperation with the NKVD 3d Department, failure to prevent the breakdown of discipline that led to war crimes in Germany, and use of tactics that caused enormous losses. Parrish observes: "Zhukov's tactics, best exemplified in the Battle of Berlin, seem crude, wasteful, and indifferent to suffering, which made him and Stalin kindred spirits." Viktor Astaf'ev, writer-*frontovik* and a leading articulator of ground truth, put it more bluntly: "We filled the German trenches with our blood and breached them with our bodies."

The list of Zhukov's military detractors reads like a "Who's Who" of the Soviet High Command; it includes not only his archrival Konev and contemporary Rokossovsky, both of whom felt betrayed when Stalin gave Zhukov the honor of taking Berlin alone, but Chuikov, Shtern, Malinovskiy, Moskalenko, and many others. The dissident General P. I. Grigorenko criticized him biting for excessive losses at Khalkhin-Gol in 1939. Though Zhukov consistently defended his aggressiveness as the least costly course of action, others termed his approach "victory at any cost." As early as 1930 Rokossovsky, then a division commander, depicted his subordinate as skilled, decisive, demanding, but authoritarian, stubborn, morbidly proud, and insufficiently sensitive. (This assessment proved both accurate and prescient; the charges leveled at him in 1946 by a vindictive Abakumov, at Stalin's bidding, and in 1957 by a suspicious Khrushchev--all of whose hands were far dirtier than his--boiled down to the same.) Casualties meant little

to Zhukov until the final days of the war, when they threatened success. But in fairness, he shared this attitude with Stalin, most of his peers, and his Party. How different the casualty figures would have been if Zhukov's position had been held by a Vassilevskiy or Konev remains conjectural.

Glasnost literature, especially the 1992 publication of Zhukov's unexpurgated memoirs, prompted the revision of Chaney's volume. Their earlier versions had suffered severely from the censor's pen; Zhukov once quipped that only half of the book was his! Party ideologist M. A. Suslov ("the Kremlin's chief expert on wind direction"--Parrish) had considered the work so hopeless that no amount of revision would save it and, when overridden, cut out 150 pages. Still, the information which arises from the new material is principally political: Zhukov's sharp criticism of the Purges, the belief that only the unexpected assignment to Khalkhin-Gol saved his skin, occasional derision of Stalin, and a censor's fawning wartime story concocted about Brezhnev as the price of publication in 1969. One important military revelation also appears: During the Berlin operation, Zhukov was directed to cut off the Allies at the Elbe *before* taking the city itself.

Zhukov is more military history and Kremlinology than biography. Even with new insights and his daughters' obligatory nostalgia, the Marshal still emerges as a two-dimensional hero in the Russian nationalist mold, albeit one stripped of Socialist glitter. The author highlights his monumental achievements and anguished abuse but sweeps his faults into the background or dismisses them entirely. Those who seek balance, or recognize contradiction, emotion (other than in the service of victory), and inner conflict as a part of the human condition, will be disappointed.

The operation that should have provided Zhukov's crowning glory--the Red Army's drive on the German capital--is the subject of Tony Le Tissier's *Zhukov at the Oder*. This well-organized volume is essentially a terrain walk in prose; the author, a Berlin-based retired British army officer and the last British Governor of Spandau Prison, earns his living as an independent historian and battlefield guide.

In a sense Le Tissier has mistitled his book, for far from playing the central role in this narrative, Zhukov emerges as a puppeteer pulling strings from the background. The real actors are Germans at the small-unit level caught in or reacting to the onslaught of the Red Army. The author makes his focus clear in the acknowledgments, thanking 62 Germans but only two Russians; his bibliography lists overwhelmingly older English- and German-language sources. He criticizes Soviet memoirs as unrevealing yet neither exploits the glasnost literature nor interviews the surviving Russians. Nonetheless, his lively account provides a vivid sense of the desperation of the time, fixation in the *Fuehrerbunker*, magnitude of the problems, scale of the resources, determination of the attackers, resourcefulness of the defenders, ferocity of the fighting, confusion of the battlefield, and yet inevitability of the outcome. His analysis of Zhukov's errors (despite meticulous preparation) in attacking the Seelow Heights--the expectation of rapid rates of advance despite adverse terrain, reconnaissance failures, initial lack of air cover, misguided use of searchlights, and premature commitment of armor prompted by frustration--helps explain the casualty figures and some of the criticism cited above. Le Tissier also introduces a topic that deserves an examination all of its own: law of war violations.

Two German productions, an exhibition of war photographs titled *Vernichtungskrieg: Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941-44*, and an exceptional World War II television documentary series by Guido Knopp, the initial segments of which are called *Der Verdammte Krieg*, illuminate this issue. For now suffice it to say that the theme cuts both ways. The Wehrmacht committed atrocities first, and the Red Army exacted an eye for an eye. Notably, the Germans have confronted their past; to date the Russians have not. (*Editor's note: The documentaries and photo collection will be reviewed in a future issue.*)

If the war was the ultimate galvanizing experience, Mark T. Hooker demonstrates in *The Military Uses of Literature* how deeply the Soviet army's Main Political Administration (MPA) depended on its motifs for troop inspiration even in peacetime. His book addresses a "made to order genre of Socialist Realism": unsophisticated Socialist morality tales designed to enhance the appeal of the army, solve problems, politically socialize often undereducated and ethnically diverse conscripts, help create "new Soviet men," and prepare them mentally for combat. Most authors engaged in the field were serving or retired political officers, since outside wartime, major Soviet writers treated the genre "with baronial disdain"; reading Hooker's study certainly suggests why.

The author perceptively analyzes an unappealing topic. This genre does not boast top-notch literature, but he shows

how over time it accurately reflected military themes preoccupying the Party leadership: nuclear weapons, technical complexity, leadership problems stemming from higher educational levels, generational change, the demands of service life, deadly force, increasing cynicism, and Afghanistan. Although one occasionally senses mirror imaging in Hooker's coverage, he writes lively prose and provides sharp insights into many problems which remain relevant even in the post-Soviet period. His reviews of *dedovshchina* (the neo-Darwinist hazing rampant in Russian troop units) and Afghanistan deserve particular attention.

Where Hooker addresses literature that the MPA specifically ordered, Herman Ermolaev in *Censorship in Soviet Literature, 1917-91* examines the other side of the coin: works methodically cut and banned. Ermolaev, a professor of Russian/Soviet literature at Princeton, exhaustively analyzed 200 works by 80 authors to provide "a comprehensive picture of censorship in literature from the inception to the dissolution of the Soviet state." He succeeds in spades. In this landmark, disciplined study he analyzes the censors' extensive revision, excision, and prohibition of derogatory material on the Red Army, partisans, underground fighters, and many other topics. His treatment of World War II tells us much about Soviet reality, given the facts. The censors did not permit mention of cowardice, misbehavior, the panicky 1941 retreat, voluntary surrender to the Germans, penal battalions, huge losses resulting from questionable tactics and arbitrary deadlines (1 May, 7 November), victory at any price, Soviet war crimes in East Prussia, or the treatment of POWs as traitors. Even in the twilight of the USSR, they restricted, delayed, or banned works reflecting the seedy side of service life: hazing, degenerate behavior, drug and alcohol abuse. They also bridled at revealing many details on Afghanistan: unit numbers, atrocities, officers' criticism of small-unit training and combat deficiencies, stifling of initiative, insufficient planning, and even material which appeared in the Western open press. Wartime truth can be a bitter pill.

To bring this discussion full circle, any number of media can accurately reflect wartime reality. Pictures do so graphically but capture only the image of an instant. Statistics do so clinically but allow comparisons. Historians, sociologists, analysts, and correspondents grapple with root causes, with widely varying degrees of success. And writers do as well. To those who may dismiss the suggestion that Soviet writers had a message about World War II which is worth stating, I commend the works of Viktor Nekrasov, Konstantin Simonov, Anatoliy Kuznetsov, Vyacheslav Kondrat'ev, Viktor Astaf'ev, and Aleksandr Tvardovskiy, selections of whose works are listed below. Reading them will put the title of this review in perspective.

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