

# passing in review

BOOKS OF  
INTEREST TO  
OUR READERS

## Impossible Project...

THE ATOMIC SUBMARINE AND ADMIRAL RICKOVER—Clay Blair, Jr. 269 pages, Illustrated. Henry Holt and Company, New York. \$3.50

Behind the President, on the last row of grandstand seats with the high ranking military officers, a thin, silver-haired man sat stiffly erect, staring at the President's back. The man's mouth was clamped shut, expressionless. His hands were knotted tightly in his lap as he listened. The man was a Navy Captain named Hyman George Rickover, 52 years old, a graduate of the Naval Academy, class of 1922. As head of a special naval task group Rickover had conceived, designed, fought and pushed the *Nautilus* into existence.

The laying of the keel of the world's first nuclear-powered submarine, *Nautilus*, on June 14, 1952, was a memorable event for the small New England seaport of Groton, Connecticut. The President of the United States, Harry Truman, came by special train to preside over the ceremony. The Governor of the state, the Secretaries and the Chiefs of the Army, Navy and Air Force, the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission—all were on hand, trailed by scores of Secret Service men and reporters. Never had the town of Groton seen so much political and military brass assembled.

The President stood up, walked to the large bank of microphones and tried to explain what the building of the *Nautilus* could mean to our country and to the world at large. In the space of four short years, he said, a project which had been considered practically impossible, had been completed. Atomic power, as such, had become a reality.

*The Atomic Submarine and Admiral Rickover* is the story of the *Nautilus*, of its conception, the planning and schooling necessary for its design, and of its eventual construction, including the almost unbelievable detail to which Admiral Rick-

over went to insure that the best in brains and material were used for the *Nautilus*.



Interesting as the portion of the book dealing with the submarine itself is, of far greater interest is the history of the man who was assigned the task of creating her. It was his fantastic courage and determination against all odds, physical, mental and political, that provided the driving force which enabled the Navy to produce its first atomic submarine. Clay Blair, Jr., of the staff of *Time-Life*, has produced a first-class, first-hand account of the harnessing of atomic power in a smoothly written, intensely interesting narrative.

Reviewed by Major G. P. Averill

## Hard-Charger...

COMMAND MISSIONS, A PERSONAL STORY—LtGen L. K. Truscott, Jr., 556 pages. E. P. Dutton & Co. Inc., New York. \$7.50

As blunt as his command procedures, General Truscott's book, contains more pungent quotes, more specific advice to future commanders, junior or senior, than its peers.

General Truscott may strike sparks by his frank personal appraisals of superiors and subordinates, Allied or American, injected as they fit into and clarify the action. Yet compliment or condemnation is incidental. With the same objectivity are

weighed the General's own mistakes. At Anzio he "placed each regiment on two lines in depth" with unfortunate results. "There I learned no unit can defend while looking over its shoulder."

Really controversial issues the author reserves for larger targets; tactical, logistic, policy and organizational criticisms where he pulls no punches. Several times, so casually they might escape notice, the General puts his head on the block for his convictions. He was never relieved, except for assignment to greater responsibilities.

Strict disciplinarian that he was, Truscott plumbed many secrets of leadership in this method. He "learned that the American soldier was unwilling to have a platoon or company commander suffer for him." Thus fines imposed publicly upon junior officers, on the spot of their men's derelictions, brought results. That the general could add "it wasn't known that the fines were never collected" may be one small hint why long after he left it, men of the 3rd Division continued to call themselves "Truscott's Division," a fact not found anywhere in the book.

Reviewed by Colonel C. G. Reinhardt

## No Four-letter Words...

PLATOON—Adam Singer. 153 pages. Lion Book, New York. \$1.25

The order from Regiment directed the 40-man platoon to move across the desert floor, climb the 2,000 foot wind-swept peaks of the enemy-infested Long Mountains and establish positions on the other side. Command sergeant Makin knew that 40,000 men couldn't do it.

Of all of them, only Makin, lance corporal Donovan and ordinary soldier Bills had ever fought the enemy. They knew their foe for what he was; "dirty and crafty, ignorant, gibbering in their strange tongues but they had sharp eyes, great patience and a deep, unwavering desire for death. Their own or the enemy's, it mattered little to them."