

The very personal stories of Doc Bradley, Mike Strank, Harlon Block, Franklin Sousley, Ira Hayes, and Rene Gagnon make as good a battle book as I've read. This book brings to us a harsh understanding of battle, providing clear glimpses of an experience "simply too painful for words."

The description of what happened to the survivors (Doc, Ira, and Rene) after they came home to America turns *Flags of Our Fathers* from a compelling battle story into a powerful exploration of the lasting effects of battle on the human heart and soul. It tells how they were instantly lionized as heroes in the "Mighty 7th" War Bond Drive and featured in John Wayne's movie "The Sands of Iwo Jima." An interesting sidelight is devoted to finally putting to rest the "controversy" about whether the photograph was staged. Ultimately, however, the book is an unflinching look at the flagraisers and their attempts to come to terms with their internal

battle scars, their demons, and the pressures of celebrity.

Doc Bradley said, "People refer to us as heroes. We certainly weren't heroes. And I speak for the rest of the guys as well." *Flags of Our Fathers* is important precisely because it also speaks for all "the rest of the guys"—all the Mikes, Harlons, Franklins, Iras, Renes, and Docs who suffered on Iwo Jima. In the end we are reminded:

They were boys of common virtue. Called to duty. Willing to die for one another. They were brothers and sons. Friends and neighbors. And fathers. It's as simple as that.

When the first flag went up on Mount Suribachi, battle-hardened Marines all over the island stopped and cheered. The Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal, was just coming ashore with Gen Holland "Howling Mad" Smith. Their cheers inspired the Secretary to exclaim, "The raising of that flag means a Marine Corps for the

next five hundred years." Today's Marines will likewise cheer this marvelously truthful new book that so admirably honors these "boys of common virtue." It will surely help Secretary Forrestal's prophetic words come true.

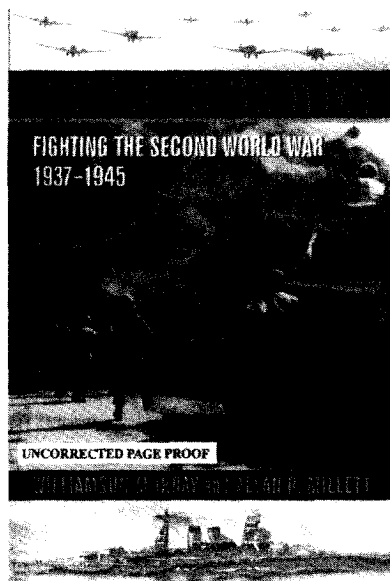


>LtCol Humm, a combat veteran of Vietnam and Beirut, recently served as the DoD liaison officer for the grand opening of The National D-Day Museum in New Orleans. An Emmy Award winning television writer/producer, he traveled to Iwo Jima with 200 veterans of the battle as field director for the 1985 PBS documentary "Return to Iwo Jima." He was also the original technical advisor for the pilot and first season of the popular CBS television series "Major Dad."

Overview of War

reviewed by John H. Barnhill

A WAR TO BE WON: Fighting the Second World War, 1937-1945. By Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2000, 640 pp., \$35.00. (Member \$31.50)



The 2d Marines, although combat veterans, had never performed an amphibious assault. The Navy provided little preassault fire. Underwater demolitions were not employed; landing craft were too few, too low in the water to cross the coral reefs, and vulnerable; the Marines used flamethrowers and artillery ineffectively. Adm Richmond Kelly Turner attempted to run the ground effort, and Gens Robert C. Richardson and Holland M. Smith sniped at each other's operational and tactical shortcomings. Bloody Tarawa cost the 2d Marine Division 1,000 dead and 2,300 wounded. At Kwajalein, barely 3 months later, total casualties were halved, and at Eniwetok halved again. The Americans learned on the

fly, corrected their mistakes on all levels, and developed the competence to win. And that's one of the major points of this book. Winners adjust; losers live, and die, in the past.

After more than half a century and hundreds of narrowly focused books and articles, finally there is a single-volume overview of military operations through the entire war. It comes from two authors fully qualified for the task. Murray is the Senior Fellow at the Institute for Defense Analysis and Millett is the Gen Raymond E. Mason, Jr. professor of military history at Ohio State University. They have collaborated several times before over the years. After 20 years of teaching the military history survey, these authors are well qualified to perform the daunting task of treating the entire war in a single volume.

The presentation is chronological, switching between the Asian and European wars, with, as in the case of the partisan effort, an occasional topical section. A strong introductory chapter addresses the European war's origins in World War I and the failed peace. An equally good chapter discusses the interwar revolution in operations and the hard reality that some armies and leaders learned while others did not.

The authors compare the belligerents' initial capabilities in intelligence, organization, logistics, armaments, deception, and so on. Having set the stage, the book addresses European campaigns through Operation BARBAROSSA before developing the same background for the Asian belligerents. In unfolding the war campaign by campaign, theater by theater, the challenge is to treat every campaign in outline and to point out failures, successes, missed opportunities—lessons for those who heed them.

The authors name names and lay blame as they go. From the legacies of World War I, through the peacetime forces and into the second war, the authors march smartly over a well-beaten path. The pace is brisk but not forced.

There's room at the end for the various homefronts and the punishment phase, when the victors defined international law. And there is an overview of the costs—psychic, as well as in dollars and lives—and the social changes stemming from this war against tyranny and evil. Make no mistake: this was a war where the evil was on one side and the right prevailed.

The authors provide crisp, if brief, descriptions of the key players. They indicate who had a grasp of strategy and the ability to learn and adapt. Because the fog of war overcomes even the best laid plans, flexibility is critical. Good warriors survive despite confusing circumstances, and circumstance is no excuse for failed leadership. There were heroes and there were vil-

lains—in this history, men mattered.

Appendices discuss weapons and military organization. There is a glossary of terms and an essay on sources for detailed study. Footnotes are limited. Chapter sources in the additional readings section are good and provide a dozen or more sources for each chapter. Written crisply, with frequent insight and the occasional telling turn of phrase, this is a good survey.

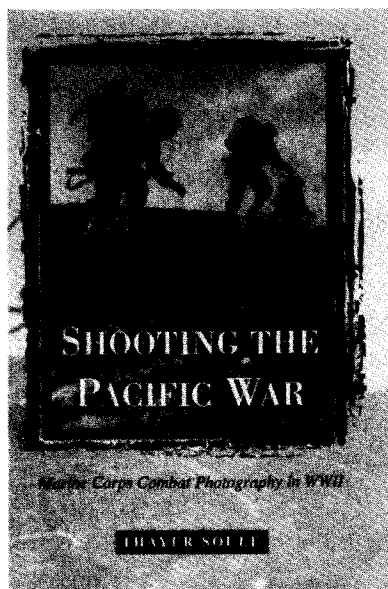


>Dr. Barnhill has nearly 20 years' experience in the DoD. He has a Ph.D. in American History and has written more than 250 articles and reviews. He is listed in Who's Who in the South and Southwest and the Directory of American Scholars.

Cameras in Combat

reviewed by Capt E. Peter Wittkoff

SHOOTING THE PACIFIC WAR: Marine Corps Combat Photography in WW II. By Thayer Soule. The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, KY, 2000, 242 pp., \$25.00. (Member \$22.50)



Thayer Soule's accomplishments had already begun prior to entering the Marine Corps and continue to this day. They include receiving a Bronze Star for his service on Iwo Jima in 1945, and in 1988 he re-

ceived the National Geographic Society Centennial Award for 41 years of travel photography. Soule was only 1 of 15 who received this prestigious award (along with John Glenn, Robert Ballard, Edmund Hillary, Jacques Cousteau, and others preeminent in their fields) for their lifetime contributions to the "dissemination of geographical knowledge." Thayer returned to Guadalcanal and Tulagi in 1965 for a travelogue, *Return to the South Pacific*; and again in 1992 with Robert Ballard for the video *The Lost Fleet of Guadalcanal*. He also wrote the book *On the Road* about his life prior to the Marines. Thayer Soule remains active in speaking engagements (e.g., at the National Archives about this book), and radio shows (e.g., conducting a recent radio show at Radio America for broadcast to 50 radio stations worldwide).

Shooting the Pacific War is a fascinating account of Marine combat

photography and its contribution to winning battles. It is also a personal account of the author's own combat experiences derived from detailed personal wartime journals. The book reads with the ease of a novel, but easily outshines novels because it documents real life events and people illustrated by the author's own first-rate pictures. Soule's book is impressive for its accuracy, its use of details, and its humor as it effectively conveys the author's message. It is one of the first books to highlight the significance of Marine combat photography. Its first person dialogue will take the reader, especially Marines, back in time.

As a seasoned photographer working in Holland when Germany invaded Poland, Thayer Soule experienced World War II before most Americans. He returned to the United States hoping to enter military service as a photographer and in 1941 "hit pay-dirt" when he was commissioned in the Marine Corps and was chosen to head the Marine's first photographic field unit.

Shooting the Pacific War is personally gratifying to me in that the Marine who began Soule's career in combat photography is my grandfather, Wally Nelson. Soule's dialogue with Capt Nelson is akin to having access to a time machine.