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**THE ARAB-ISRAELI WARS: War and Peace in the Middle East.** By Chaim Herzog. Random House, New York, 1982, 392pp. \$20.00. (Member \$18.00)

reviewed by Eric M. Hammel

Elements of the U.S. Marine Corps and *Zahal*, the Israel Defense Force, find themselves facing one another in Lebanon across a widening gulf of mutual exasperation.

*Zahal* and the Marine Corps share many more characteristics, virtues, professional goals, and doctrines than do most Western military arms. While the one was born of a marriage of land and naval warfare and the other is an orphan of the desert, the two are committed to similar ideals of professional excellence. The Israeli world view—and, by extension, that of *Zahal*—is insular while the American—and, by extension, that of the Marine Corps—is global.

MajGen Chaim Herzog, one of Israel's most eloquent military professionals, an urbane, cultured British-trained soldier-statesman, was elected President of Israel in March 1983. Before his election he was a founding member of *Zahal*, a former chief of army intelligence, a former ambassador to the United Nations, and a member of the opposition Labor Party's contingent to the Knesset. He is without question the right man to explain the less-positive-seeming attributes of *Zahal* to U.S. Marines. Obviously, this was not one of the things Herzog set out to do in *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, but it is a fundamental benefit Marines can gain from his latest, highly readable, patiently evolving, and lavishly diagrammed book. Global realities, the politics of oil, and local strife, it would seem, hold in store a long confrontation between the Marine Corps and *Zahal*. Perhaps it would ease the harsher potentialities if Americans avail themselves of this opportunity to study the traditions of this most successful of the world's young armies. It is a cinch, if I know my Israelis, that *Zahal* is not interested in

making an effort to accommodate an American view of life and war in the Middle East.

Herzog's is simply the best and most clearly written account of *Zahal's* history and the formation of its traditions and ethos. What Herzog makes abundantly clear, as he progresses through accounts of the 40 years of bloodshed that have led to the recent facedowns between American and Israeli allies, is that the *Zahal* that is in the field in Lebanon is a far stronger, more professional instrument of national will than the *Zahal* Marines have admired so strongly at least since 1967. However, it is a different *Zahal* in another sense. The defenders of Israel (Rabin, Dayan, Elazar, Tal, Gur, Adan and Bar-Lev) who commanded the companies and battalions of 1948 and the brigades and divisions, or *Zahal* itself, in 1967 and 1973 are all gone from the service, replaced by an officer corps indoctrinated in the tradition of 1948, but no longer of that tradition.

If Marines would like to find an explanation for the hostile attitudes of Israelis with whom they come in contact around Beirut, Herzog's account of the evolution of *Zahal* and its constant world political rebuffs following its faultless string of strategic and tactical victories will suffice. (If it does not, consider the love/hate relationship Third World nations routinely have with the United States and consider that a flawlessly victorious army is bound to let at least a smidgin of contempt creep into its dealings with representatives of a nation that was not victorious in its last war.) In all of its wars, *Zahal* has, in its corporate mind, been denied absolute victory as a result of outside, international intervention. Imagine the feelings of combat Marines if, for example, outside parties had intervened in March 1945 to declare Mount Suribachi an international zone immune from attack, or if the southern half of Okinawa had been denied American forces so that an otherwise defeated and demoralized Imperial Army could reconstitute itself safe from the scene of Pacific War combat. We all

know how American troops in Vietnam felt about the ability of our enemies to flee at will across an international boundary, unpursued and unpursuable. Well, the feelings of Israeli soldiers are described in rather implicit but nonetheless poignant detail in *The Arab-Israeli Wars*.

A last-minute assessment of the Lebanon Campaign of 1982 (through July 15) concentrates upon actions against Soviet-equipped Syrian regular Army units in the mountainous terrain of southeastern Lebanon. If for no other reason, *The Arab-Israeli Wars* must be read to gain an appreciation of the methods employed to defeat massed SAM batteries and the latest Soviet armor. In this sense, the Lebanon Campaign of 1982 should be more important to Marines than the Falklands War that pitted Western equipment against other Western equipment.

There are particularly harsh words—rare in so public and international an offering—reserved for Ariel Sharon, the first Israeli general officer to run for political office while serving as a division commander in combat. Speaking most frankly, Herzog questions Sharon's integrity as a man and as a leader. (Men who served under Sharon in 1956, 1967 and, particularly, in 1973 have openly questioned his fitness to command, for he excelled in grabbing headlines occasionally at the expense, some believe, of Israeli lives.) "Bren" Adan, a fellow division-commander in Sinai in 1973, discusses at great length Sharon's moral fitness in his recent book *On the Banks of the Suez* (reviewed in these pages in Aug82).

Withal, Herzog states unequivocally that the elite commando unit formed by young Maj Sharon in 1953 itself established the very high standards of excellence to which every *Zahal* recruit aspires.

*Zahal* is a weapon to be reckoned with, as modern and motivated an all-battlefield army as there is on the planet. It is not widely known that the recent war was undertaken almost entirely by the standing army, supported by only a very few Reserve units and individual reservists with very special skills. A very large contingent of the standing establishment was not even deployed in Lebanon, but served to cover other borders, by no means secure.

This reviewer, who lived in Israel in 1974-1975, can attest to the efficiency of *Zahal* in fielding its divisions. One

morning, I arrived for breakfast from a stint of tractor-driving, which began before sunrise, to find that every able-bodied man on my Negev Desert kibbutz, mostly tank crewmen and parachutists blooded a year earlier in Sinai or the Golan, had been called up during the night and sent in the form of several complete Reserve divisions to the Golan to ensure an extension of the armistice, which the Syrian president was showing signs of ignoring. Exactly six months later, while staying at a kibbutz overlooking the Sea of Galilee, directly across from the Golan, I watched a day-long procession of Israeli armor pass by on the way to the Golan, the better to ensure the very next armistice extension. In 1973, my younger brother, a *Zahal* armored-infantry reservist, was well on his way into action in Sinai within 18 hours of being called to duty on the first day of the war.

In *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, Herzog explains completely the dire historical imperatives which have spawned an ability by a nation of 3.3 million to field a modern, incredibly well-equipped fighting army of 300,000+ within hours of a general call to arms. Granted that Israel is blessed with the ability to operate on very short internal lines (a mixed blessing, you may be certain, for meaningful strategic depth does not exist), but it would be well for the Marine Corps, with its global mission of rapid deployment, to study closely the methods of logistical pre-positioning, weapons procurement, equipment modernization and upgrading, and a plethora of other equalizers routinely employed by *Zahal*.

Some parallels between *Zahal* and the Marine Corps are well worth noting. In combat, platoon leaders *lead*; company commanders *lead*; battalion commanders *lead*. Often, Israeli brigadiers *lead*. Small arms training and cross-training are given extremely high priority; every man is a basic rifleman! The troops are generally well-motivated and uniformly well-informed. All *Zahal* officers have served in the ranks; many Marine officers are mustangs. Primary reliance is placed upon individual initiative. Planning is flexible at higher levels and open to interpretation by "the man on the spot." Levels of education throughout *Zahal* are generally very high. *Zahal*, like the Marine Corps, is an institutional elite; both have even more elite organizations within the larger elite. Once strategic

goals have been attained, air units operate more-or-less organically in close and direct support roles. Training is ongoing and progressive. (*Zahal*, of course, has the advantage of being able to call upon trained personnel between ages 18 and 55.) A major difference between *Zahal* and the Marine Corps (and indeed, all American services) is that *Zahal* makes a point of directing many of its better-educated, less socially marginal enlisted personnel into combat units.

Chaim Herzog, the Labor Party politician, came out strongly against prolonged Israeli military intervention in Lebanon. This position, however, has not restrained the sheer pride of the man in *Zahal*. Herzog allows his readers to make no mistake; the blunt Israelis have forged a superb, elegant, surgically-precise weapon of immense subtlety, power, and dedication. That weapon has but one purpose, and that is the preservation of the democratic state of which it is, sadly, the most-important and best-known institution. In *Zahal*, we Americans can see plainly the successful embodiment of the military tradition we hold most dear: the "citizen-soldier," reluctant to fight, reliable when called upon to do so, and utterly determined to triumph.

**THE BATTLE FOR THE FALKLANDS.** by Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins. Michael Joseph, London, 1983.\*

**WAR IN THE FALKLANDS—The Full Story.** By Sunday Times of London's Insight Team. Andre Deutsch, London, 1982.\*

**EYEWITNESS FALKLANDS.** By Robert Fox. Methuen, London, 1982.\*

**THE WINTER WAR.** By Patrick Bishop and John Witherow. Quartet Books, New York, 1982, 153pp., \$5.95. (Member \$5.35)

**WAR IN THE FALKLANDS: The Campaign in Pictures.** By the Sunday Express. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1982.\*

\*No U.S. publisher identified as yet.

reviewed by Col(sel) N.F. Vaux, DSO, R.M.

Recent publication of *The Battle for the Falklands* by Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins almost certainly concludes production of the eyewit-

ness accounts by journalists from the war last year. OPERATION CORPORATE, as it was codenamed, was the largest British operation of war since Korea and certainly the most successful since World War II. What is more, victory was achieved with astonishingly light casualties, against apparently overwhelming odds, more than 8,000 miles away from the United Kingdom's ports and bases. No wonder that such an event has generated intense professional interest amongst the military worldwide, or that this is now reflected in the apparently endless demand for books on the subject! Not all of these are necessarily worth reading, however, since the degree of accuracy and breadth of information are usually in inverse proportion to the haste with which publications were rushed onto the street. As most of the books are also written by the handful of British journalists, reluctantly permitted to accompany the task force at the last minute, quality also varies with their military perception and experience as well as with the degree of access they achieved to commanders and major events.

On all counts *The Battle for the Falklands* emerges as the front runner. Hastings, who was recently selected as Journalist of the Year for his Falklands reporting, is already an acknowledged military historian and veteran war correspondent. With a combination of unscrupulous initiative, coupled with an unerring instinct for impending drama, he moved around the units on the battlefield to wherever the action was. Indeed, during initial operations, I recall him somehow smuggling his giant frame into our night helicopter seizure of Mount Kent. At the end he preceded the Argentinian surrender by walking into Stanley alone for an exclusive view of the final moments of their defeat. In addition to recounting such personal coups, Hastings analyzes the strategy (with the logistics that dominated so much of that), the air and sea battles that actually determined the outcome, the interservice rivalries and relationships, as well as the awesome pressures now placed upon military commanders because today's technology of instant communication takes political influence directly onto the battlefield.

His colleague Jenkins is the political editor of *The Economist* and, as such, possesses impeccable creden-