

BOOKS



Capsule reviews of books of general professional interest. Any book listed may be purchased by MCA members via Gazette Bookservice at reduced rates. See pages 10 and 11 for BOOK LIST.

VIET CONG. By Douglas Pike. (The M.I.T. Press: Cambridge, 490 pps., \$8.95.)

Mr. Pike is a Foreign Service officer with USIA. He has spent six years in Viet-Nam and is well acquainted with the area, the people and the culture. This book was written during a research leave from his post to study at the Center for International Studies of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It is a monumental work.

Within its pages, the author presents no thesis per se. It is a reportorial analysis of the background of Viet-Nam and its insurgent movements. The National Liberation Front is the topic and it is completely explored from: origins, aims and methodology to a lengthy appendix of short biographical sketches of its leaders.

The title *Viet Cong* is explained as a misnomer but in the words of the author to his publisher it is used "not because the term is fully accurate (it is not) but because it will do what a title is supposed to do: tell the reader what the book is about." It does; it tells you about your enemy, what he is and why he is. No responsible Marine, whether he has been to Viet-Nam or is about to go, can afford to avoid reading Mr. Pike's study of what lies "on the other side of the hill."

CANNONADE. By Fairfax Downey. (Doubleday: Garden City, 381 pps., \$6.50.)

The sub-title of this book is "Great Artillery Actions of History, the Famous Cannons and the Master Gunners." That title is descriptive of the book in itself. But there are other facts and sidelights that both artillerymen and non-artillerymen will enjoy. Mr. Downey's deft style covers such things as Jan Zizka's wagon forts (long before the tanks of Cambrai), the fabulous *soixante-quinze* of World War I and Marine artillery in action at the foot of the Changjin Reservoir.

THE FIGHTING MAN. By Jack Coggins. (Doubleday: Garden City, 372 pps., \$9.95.)

The author's sketches in this large book, an illustrated history of fighting men through the ages, are reminiscent of the late Col. John W. Thomason USMC. All the world's great military formations are represented on these pages, which make interesting and informative reading.

THE WEAPONS OF WORLD WAR III. By John S. Tompkins. (Doubleday: Garden City, 340 pps., \$5.95.)

The subtitle of this book is "The Long Road Back from the Bomb." The author's thesis is that what has taken place in the last 15 or more years is actually World War III. He takes issue with those who claim that the nuclear holocaust is or will be World War III. Mr. Tompkins maintains that the continuing conventional, limited wars are the cumulative actions that future historians will catalog as World War III.

The former preoccupation with a single-weapon strategy and the events that led to the return to a flexible response are examined in both outline and depth. There is a certain iconoclasm in his approach. Many sacred cows or former sacred cows are sacrificed on Mr. Tompkins' altar.

The author is an editor of *Business Week* and writes articles on military affairs. The real significance of this work is the depth of research. Much of it is from published sources, particularly the Congressional hearings on defense appropriations. He also cites the professional military journals (*GAZETTE inter alia*) as an excellent source of his material.

All of us will not agree with all Mr. Tompkins has to say. Many of us will take issue with the areas wherein his views oppose ours; but as we close the last page, we will be thinking more about our profession and about our part in the scheme of national and world events. I'm sure that the author could ask no more.

THE UNITED STATES NAVY IN WORLD WAR II. Compiled and Edited by S. E. Smith. (Morrow: New York, 1,049 pps., \$12.50.)

This is an anthology of naval writings during and since the war. Mr. Smith intertwines naval narratives by distinguished naval officers, journalists and others with his own comments. Unfortunately, it is a big book of little stories covering ground plowed more adeptly before. Not all of Mr. Smith's writing is accurate; e.g., who ever heard of the *Grumman F4U*?

It may pass as worthwhile reading for the superficial student of naval history; it is hardly required reading for the military professional.

THE CAMPAIGNS OF NAPOLEON. By David Chandler. (MacMillan: New York, 1,172 pps., \$17.50.)

From Toulon to Waterloo with map and order of battle: should be sufficient incentive for serious military students to invest in this volume. The diagrams and the sketches are complete in themselves. The text, well-written and absorbing, gives magnificent insight into the campaigns and intrigues of this "Great Captain."

While Mr. Chandler's *magnum opus* is not meant to be light reading except for the dedicated, it turns out to be facile and enchanting. Those who have gleaned lessons of leadership from D. S. Freeman's *Lee's Lieutenants* will add to their knowledge of the subject. Those who wish to learn about the evolution of tactics, can do so here. Many a delightful evening, with pipe and port, can be passed with these pages.

LUDENDORFF. By D. J. Goodspeed. (Houghton Mifflin Co.: Cambridge, 335 pps., \$6.00.)

This is the story of the "Victor of Leige" and his subsequent successes and failures. Many remember Ludendorff only for his brave gesture of 1923—continuing to march erectly as befitted a *Junker* while Hitler and his storm troopers grovelled in the street after the first volley from the police. Others will be intrigued by the way the author reopens the question of the real victor of Tannenberg. Mr. Goodspeed, of course, credits his subject with the genius for the battle, since he was the Chief of Staff. Due credit is given to LtCol Hoffman for his timely orders. Little is said about the role of von Hindenburg, who was called from retirement to command at the battle. The author reopens the debate so eloquently closed by von Hindenburg: "I really don't know who *won* the battle of Tannenberg, I only know who would have *lost* it!"

All in all, *Ludendorff* is interesting military biography.