

BOOKS



Book reviews of general interest to the military professional are solicited. Any book listed may be purchased by MCA members from the MCA Bookservice at reduced rates. Length: 300-750 words.

THE U.S. MARINES AND AMPHIBIOUS WAR, By J. A. Isley and P. A. Crowl, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., reprint of 1951 edition, 636 pp., \$11.95. (Member \$9.95)

reviewed by Col J. C. Studt

MajGen D. M. Twomey once described this book as the finest work ever produced on the theory and practice of amphibious war in the Pacific. He was absolutely right! Now available through a reprinting by the Marine Corps Association, it should be in the personal library of every Marine officer.

The authors, then Princeton professors, undertook the work shortly after World War II when a great deal of firsthand research material was available, and then only after the Commandant of the Marine Corps agreed he "will have no competence to alter or modify the findings of the authors or the conclusions reached in the study." The result is a superb, scientific analysis of the doctrines and techniques of amphibious war in the Pacific; an unbiased, scholarly, and fascinating history of Pacific operations in World War II. But it is far more than a history, which the authors point out "... is of value only if it helps to solve pending and future problems," and their goal was to stimulate and help toward further tactical developments, for "the problem of landing on shores held by an enemy remains."

The volume is splendidly researched, starting with a brief summary of the early evolution of amphibious doctrine, which Isley and Crowl introduce by the interesting device of contrasting the ultimate debacle, Gallipoli, where no amphibious doctrine existed, with the ultimate success, Okinawa, where amphibious doctrine had been developed to a practical science. The 30-year road from Gallipoli to Okinawa, however, was not a smooth one. The authors point out the numerous obstacles, such as the Navy's low priority on amphibious operations, noting that the Commandant in 1914 "seemed to suspect a widespread indifference to

'advance-base work' among Navy circles in general." Sound familiar? Nor were all obstacles external. The Corps was not immune from the time-honored tradition of training for the last war rather than the next:

As late as 1926 the staff of the Marine Corps Schools was still in the thrall of "outmoded military thought" and still "floundering among the outdated doctrines of World War I," according to Holland M. Smith who went through the field officers' course in that year.

After a review of amphibious training between the World Wars, a progression from chaos to development of a sound doctrinal framework, the authors next examine each Pacific operation in World War II, describing each in detail: the strategic decision process that resulted in the landing, planning, naval gunfire, air support, ship-to-shore movement, the assault ashore, and logistics. Aside from what actually happened, successes and shortcomings in each of these areas are then analyzed. Basically, it is the same technique that was used by Rommel in *Infantry Attacks*, describing a battle then analyzing lessons learned—but more detailed and written in a more scholarly vein. In contrast to many "official" histories, there is no attempt to gloss over problems and failures, and they do not hesitate to point out poor performance by any of the Services, including some quite embarrassing to the Marine Corps.

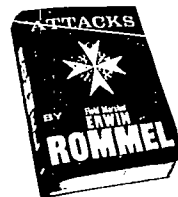
In balance, however, these scholars clearly developed, in the course of their painstaking research, a hearty respect for the Corps, and are not above praise, as in reference to Maj-Gen Rupertus' 1st Marine Division during the Cape Gloucester operation: "Individual Marines amazed Army observers with their discipline and cool determination under fire."

The reader cannot help but be impressed with the zeal with which participants, both Navy and Marine, identified flaws in their performance and quickly developed far-reaching remedies. For example, the major problems with naval gunfire, air support, and ship-to-shore movement at Tarawa, where Marines suffered al-

most as many total casualties as the Japanese and achieved a kill-ratio of only 4:1, were largely solved only a few months later when Americans secured Kwajalein Atoll with a kill ratio of 27:1—a far cry from the long leadtimes required for progress in peacetime.

Many little known or little remembered facts are brought out. For example that Marine aviators shot down over 1,500 Japanese aircraft in the Solomons and over Rabaul at a time when Marine fighters were carrying the brunt of air combat against the Japanese. Since these Japanese aircraft were predominantly naval, it was essentially the Marines who broke the back of Japanese naval aviation. Japan was never able to replace these losses of skilled carrier pilots. The authors also debunk the myth that Marine aggressiveness in maintaining the momentum of the attack ashore was too costly in comparison to the Army's policy of a more deliberate, slower advance to ensure complete reduction of enemy positions as they progressed. The Marine system of bypassing strong points rather than halting actually resulted in fewer friendly casualties

ROMMEL FOR LEADERS



This is the Book that "Electrified" Patton

It is Rommel's personal story of his development from a

green lieutenant to a confident, seasoned, combat commander.

"It deals with combat from the perspective of men and leaders, not men and computers and systems analysts. There are few books that have the potential to inspire and instruct young combat leaders—this one does."

Military Review

"... among the books that military historians and military professionals will point to as the most important works in military literature.

Infantry

THE FIRST COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED ENGLISH EDITION. 325 pp, 80 sketches and drawings. Hardcover.

14.95 plus \$1.25 for postage and insurance (VA res. add 60¢ tax)

VISA/MC Welcome: Send number and expiration date.

ATHENA PRESS INC.
PO BOX 776
VIENNA, VIRGINIA 22180

relative to total enemy casualties inflicted.

Perhaps one aspect of Isely and Crowl's analysis will not set well with Marine readers; they absolutely cannot understand that there can be any real difference between a Marine and a U.S. soldier since the two come from the same families and were mostly trained by the same manuals. How can one be superior to the other? They go into lengthy analysis, but do not really come up with a satisfactory explanation of what they clearly recognized as superior performance by Marines. But their research did not extend to an examination of recruiting and recruit training, and esprit de corps is hard to quantify.

The last chapter contains an outstanding analytical summary of amphibious progress in World War II and concludes with these words, which some senior national security planners today would do well to read:

If the world again erupts in total war, bases essential to the effective employment of air and sea power must be seized regardless of the opposition encountered and beachheads on large land masses will probably have to be wrested from hostile

powers. To accomplish these ends the best possible amphibious doctrine will be essential. If past record of the Marine Corps is any indication of future performance, the world can be reasonably confident that such a doctrine will be provided.

VICTORY AT GUADALCANAL.
By Robert Edward Lee. Presidio Press, Novato, Calif., 1981, 260 pp., \$15.95. (Member \$14.35)

reviewed by H. C. Merrillat

Four decades later, the Guadalcanal campaign still attracts writers. The reasons are understandable. It was the first U.S. offensive and the turning point in the war with Japan, and it had a profound impact on the remainder of that conflict. Moreover, it makes a darned good story, gripping and suspenseful even though the reader knows the outcome.

The writer of the book here reviewed apparently was drawn by the good-story possibilities. There is also a nostalgic link; he was with an Army regiment on the island after it was secured. Mr. Lee's narrative covers the six-month period between D-day and the final Japanese evacuation, giving most attention to sea, air, and ground actions in the months when

日本刀
JAPANESE SWORDS

For Free Evaluation Sheet \$200
\$10,000
CASH PAID

TOLL FREE 800-435-5119

David E. J. Pegin—Member NBTHK, Tokyo, Japan
Dept S3, P.O. Box 354, Grant Park, IL 60949

MCA Bookservice

MCA members may buy at a discount almost any book published in the U.S. and still in print. Send complete information—title, author, and publisher—to MCA Bookservice, Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134. You'll be billed upon shipment, usually in 2-6 weeks

the issue was in serious doubt. He has written in a lively journalistic style, and—less felicitously—with a lively imagination.

Anyone who has studied the Guadalcanal campaign (or, for that matter, any major military operation) is aware of discrepancies in detail among accounts of this or that episode, all with some claim to being authoritative. Variations are inevitable; honest men see the same event through different eyes and from different perspectives. They remem-

Soar to Great Heights in Naval and Marine Corps Aviation Reading

Gold Wings, Blue Sea

A Naval Aviator's Story

By CAPT Rosario Rausa, USNR

Captain Rausa vividly captures the spirit of naval aviation, from flight school through assignments in the Mediterranean, the United States, and Vietnam—in Skyraiders, Skyhawks, and A-7 Corsairs. Here are the humorous, thrilling, and sobering sides of flying, as Rausa relates in lively detail his experiences as a naval aviator from the late fifties through the seventies. This fascinating, breath-taking story leaves the reader feeling as though he were witnessing every episode from the copilot's seat.

1981/216 pages/illustrated/List price: \$15.95

Red Sun Setting

The Battle of the Philippine Sea

By William T. Y'Blood

A definitive account of the "Great Marianas Turkey Shoot" told from the viewpoint of the fliers and sailors who were there on the firing line. Drawing on ten years of research, the author leads his reader through every stage of the battle; from the dogfights, to the persistent attacks on the Japanese carriers, to the frantic efforts of the returning fliers to land on friendly carriers. From the initial planning, to the invasion of the Marianas, to the recriminations that followed, the action unfolds in gripping, blow-by-blow detail.

1981/208 pages/illustrated/List price: \$18.95

Book Order Department, U.S. Naval Institute,
Annapolis, MD 21402

MC

Yes. Please send me

____ copy(ies) of *Gold Wings, Blue Sea* (2192) @ \$15.95 each

____ copy(ies) of *Red Sun Setting* (5329) @ \$18.95 each

I have enclosed my check or money order for \$ _____, including \$ _____ for postage and handling (Postage and handling charges are \$2.50 for orders from \$15.01 to \$30.00; and \$3.25 for orders in excess of \$30.00. Please add 5% sales tax for delivery within the State of Maryland.)

Please bill me.

Charge it to my



Account Number _____

Exp Date _____

Signature (Charges not valid unless signed)

Name _____

Address _____

City, State _____

Zip _____

Naval Institute Press